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THE UNITED STATES, BRITAIN AND CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN THAILAND

1932-48

by

© GREGORY L. PLOUFFE

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF M.A. IN HISTORY

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ABSTRACT

Following the 1932 abolition of the absolute monarchy in Thailand, attempts to develop constitutional government coincided with the outbreak of hostilities in the Far East. By the late 1930's, particularly in Thailand, a dominant British influence in the region was challenged by Japan. Consequently the military faction of the new Thai government was able to gain political supremacy. Through close application of the cultural and organizational schemes of the Japanese military state, Thai Field Marshall Phibul Songkhramm effectively squeezed out his civilian opponents. When, in January 1942, Thailand's military government declared war on Britain and the United States, this group of civilians formed a pro-Allied underground resistance numbering over 50,000 men. In 1944, with Japan's prospects for victory waning a civilian coalition of resistance members and former royalists formed a government which displaced the military and worked to disassociate Thailand as a co-belligerent of defeated Imperial Japan.

Through to the conclusion of World War II, Britain and the United States never reached agreement on a postwar policy for the strategic and never colonized Southeast Asian nation. The United States, which had refused to acknowledge the Thai declaration of war, used its influence to mitigate British demands for a demobilization and reorganization of Thailand's armed forces under Allied supervision. However, a joint U.S.-British Board enacted harsh indemnities of rice and other raw materials against a Thai economy already seriously weakened by war. A party of Thai liberals led by law professor Pridi Panomyong, former leader of the pro-Allied resistance, won a majority in Thailand's first postwar elections in 1946. Despite measures aimed at stablizing

economic conditions, Pridi's government was plagued by corruption and the combined opposition of traditional Siamese landowners and a discredited officer corps. The unexplained death of the young King Ananda Mahidol was used to create further difficulties for the liberal group which had been largely unsuccessful at regulating widespread black market activity and the marked inefficiency of its government's bureaucracy.

Pridi's association with nationalist movements in the region resulted in the introduction of a plan for a Pan-Southeast Asian Union of independent Burmese, Thai and Indochinese states. By early 1947 plans were also made by the civilian administration to reduce military spending in Thailand. Simultaneously, American policymakers, who had long realized the strategic importance of Thailand became strongly aware of the threat posed by monolithic communism. The Truman Doctrine clarified this viewpoint for the world. Suddenly renascent European imperialism, long disparaged by the United States, now became preferable to expansion of Marxist governments. Opposition to Pridi's government increased greatly and culminated in the military coup of November 9th 1947. Phibul, with the tacit support of the more conservative elements of the civilian regime, usurped power with the alleged support of the United States and Nationalist Chinese governments. Pridi and his associates fled into exile. For a brief period the military allowed nominal civilian control of government under Khuang Aphaiwong but took complete control of the country in April 1948. Subsequently Phibul gained recognition and substantial material support from both the United States and Britain due largely to his fervently anti-communist policies.

FORWARD

For the reader unfamiliar with the personalities and events of recent Thai history I have included brief outlines of pertinent biographic and chronological data as a preface to the main text of the thesis. Those individuals and historical forces which most strongly influenced Thailand's history during that nation's period of "political modernization" are thus outlined.

THAILAND FACT SHEET
(1932-1948)

June 24, 1932	Overthrow of the absolute monarchy and establishment of constitutional government by a mixed military-civilian group.
December 16, 1938	Accession to dictatorial power of Field-Marshall Phibul Songkhramm, a key leader of the 1932 coup.
October 1, 1940	Phibul indicates willingness to permit Japanese forces to use Thai territory in exchange for support for Thai claims on parts of Cambodia, Laos, Burma and Malaya.
December 8, 1941	The day after Pearl Habour, Phibul permits Japanese passage through Thailand, allowing them to outflank the Allies in Burma and Malaya.
January 25, 1942	Phibul declares war on the U.S. and Great Britain. In Washington, Thai Ambassador Seni Pramoj refuses to present declaration of war, calls for underground resistance. Pridi Panomyong forms "Free Thai" resistance movement to assist the Allied war effort.
July 26, 1944	Facing pressure from the underground resistance and demoralized by the deteriorating war situation, Phibul resigns.
September 17, 1945	Following V-J Day, Seni Pramoj becomes Premier with the support of resistance leaders. Meanwhile, British attempts to reduce the political influence of the Thai military are overruled by the U.S.
January 6, 1946	In Thailand's first really free elections, left-of-center resistance leaders, led by Pridi Panomyong, outpoll Seni Pramoj and his brother Kukrit, who head centrist parties.
September 9, 1947	Under the leadership of Pridi, the Southeast Asia League is formed in Bangkok to support anti-colonial movements in Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Viet Nam, Malaya, and Burma.
November 8, 1947	Phibul's supporters carry out a coup, exiling the civilian resistance leaders and installing a civilian Premier as a front.
January 29, 1948	In elections from which war-time resistance leaders are barred, moderates led by Seni and Kukrit Pramoj resoundingly defeat military backed candidates.
April 6, 1948	Despite their election victory, the moderates are forced out of office by the Thai military.

BIOGRAPHIES OF CENTRAL CHARACTERS IN THAI POLITICS 1932-48

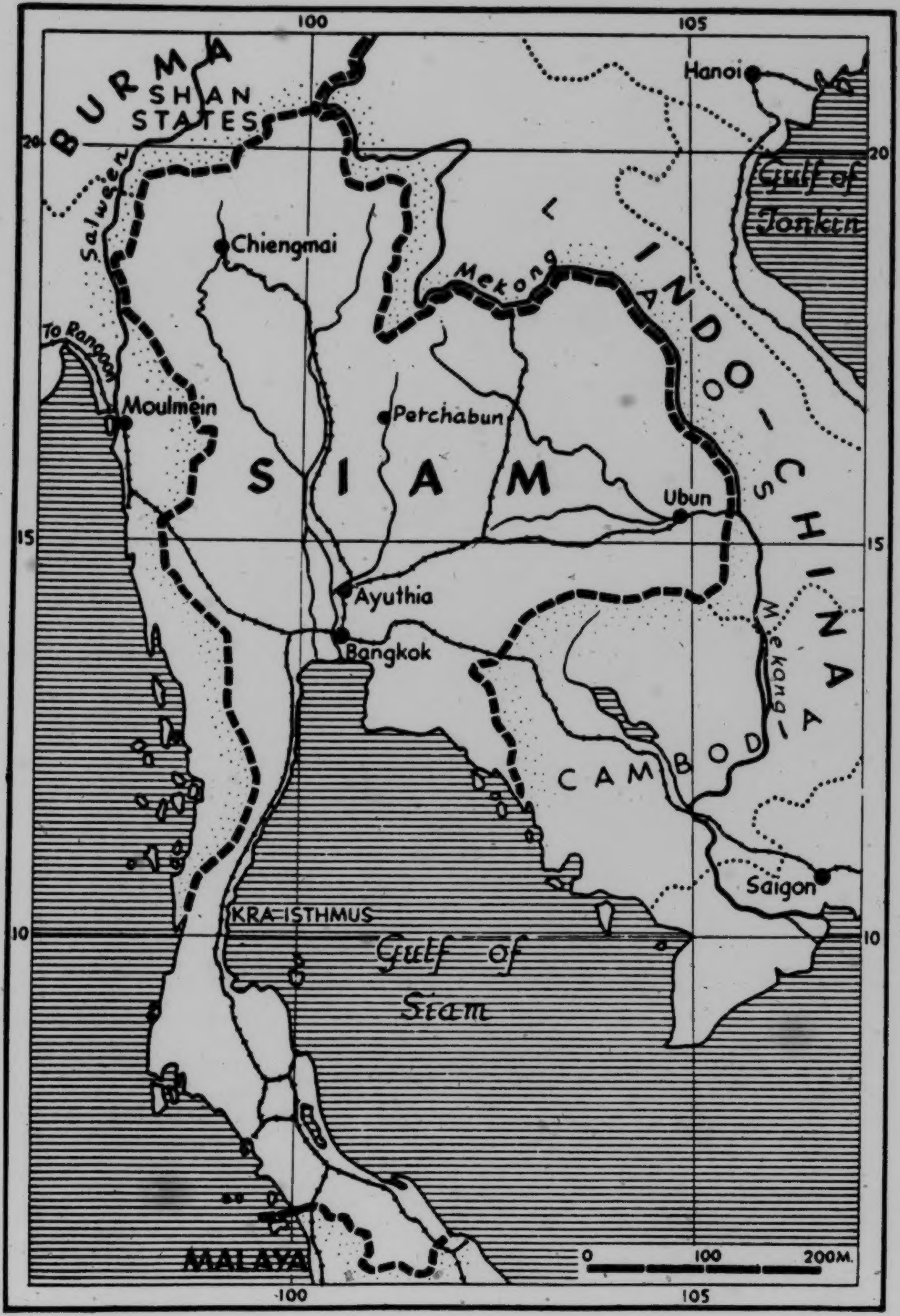
Khuang Aphiwong was born on May 17, 1902 in Battembang province Cambodia, the fourth son of a wealthy landowner who was the last State High Commissioner before the province's annexation by France. An engineer by profession, having studied at the University of Grenoble and in Thailand, Khuang was appointed as Minister of Communications following the 1932 coup d'etat which deposed Siam's absolute Monarchy. In the military government of Phibul Songkhramm, Khuang held the position of Education Minister and because of his Cambodian lineage, was the representative selected to receive the surrender of Cambodian territory from Vichy France in 1941. During World War Two, Khuang came into some conflict with Phibul on the issue of co-operation with the Japanese and was refused an opportunity to serve in the assembly. He became associated with the anti-Japanese resistance movement and with the fall of Phibul's regime assumed the position of Interim Premier in August 1944. Despite being internationally unknown, Khuang developed a strong populist appeal and established important connections with the Sakdina, Thailand's traditional propertied class.

Thawee Bunyaketu was born in 1903 and educated in Birmingham, England and the University of Paris. Following the 1932 coup, he served as a Minister without portfolio, but after the ascendance of the military government in 1938, fell into disfavour. He resigned his cabinet position during World War Two but regained influence in the Thai government in 1944 following the resignation of Phibul Songkhramm. Thawee, who was fluent in English, had acted as an executive member of the Free Thai resistance and showed himself to be a strong supporter of the Allied cause.

Pridi Panomyong was born in 1899 in Ayuthaya province Thailand of mixed Chinese-Thai parentage. A specialist in political-economy, Pridi studied law in Paris where he received a Doctorate and became a professor of Law at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. As chief planner and leader of the 1932 coup d'etat which deposed Siam's absolute Monarchy, Pridi attempted to implement radically comprehensive centralization of the nation's economy. Opposition to the plan from members of the Sakdina and senior military officers resulted in his brief exile from Thailand and the subsequent domination of government by the military. Re-appointed as Minister of Finance in 1938, he was again placed in opposition to Phibul and the military on the issue of co-operation with Japan and subsequently resigned from the cabinet in 1941. At this point Pridi formed the "Free Thai" resistance and distinguished himself during the war as a courageous supporter of the Allies. With the defeat of the Japanese, Pridi, who had assumed the position of regent and elder statesman, championed democratic reform in Thailand's postwar government.

Seni Pramoj served as Minister to the United States throughout the course of World War Two. He was born of Sakdina lineage and distinguished himself in the pursuit of legal studies at Oxford University. A judge at age 26, Seni became Secretary to the Siamese Supreme Court in 1934 and Minister to Washington in 1940. By refusing to deliver Thailand's declaration of war on the United States in January of 1942, Seni helped to gain American support for Thai resistance to the Japanese. In September he was appointed Interim Premier of Thailand and subsequently formed a political party to contest the country's first postwar elections.

Phibul Songkhramm was born in 1897 and received military training at Bangkok, Westpoint and Fontainebleau. He came into prominence in 1933 when he successfully supressed a royalist countercoup, emerging as a national hero. In 1934 he was appointed Minister of Defense and subsequently founded the Yuvachon Youth Movement - a paramilitary organization formed along fascist lines. Phibul's influence grew and in December of 1938 he became Premier of Thailand, holding concurrently the portfolios of Defense, Foreign Affairs and the Interior. Following the outbreak of war in the Pacific Phibul negotiated an alliance with Japan and, in an effort to undermine the influence of Pridi Panomyong and the Thai liberals, he reshuffled the Council of Ministers. In July 1944, with the defeat of Japan imminent, he resigned due to the unpopularity of his domestic policies and his collaboration with the Axis.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PRIDI PHANOMYONG

Luang Pibul Songgram

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INTRODUCTION

In the years before World War II, Siamese politicians were faced with the formidable task of forging constitutional governance in the midst of a struggle for strategic and economic advantage in Southeast Asia in which Britain, the United States and Japan were principal players. Having pushed aside absolutist rule in 1932, an unsteady coalition of military officers and civilian bureaucrats attempted to solidify the international relations and domestic authority of Siam's fledgling administration. As the cataclysm of World War II approached, Siam, strategically located in the mainland heart of Southeast Asia, reckoned prominently in the contingency plans of the Great Powers. The longstanding preeminence of British commercial interests in the region was threatened by the imminent expansion of Japan's Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere. Similarly, American policymakers, who had long resented European domination of the Southeast Asian resource pool, targeted commercial access to the region as essential to the industrial hegemony and national security of the United States.

The subsequent defeat of Imperial Japan brought to fruition the Allied goals of economic stability and free access to the strategic resources of Southeast Asia. However, the future status of Thailand, whose military-dominated government had sided with a now vanquished Japan, became a contentious and divisive issue which, in addition to exposing the conflict between British and American interests in the region, clearly hampered the development of parliamentary democracy in Thailand. It is significant that in contrast to the antagonism that characterized Anglo-U.S. relations, the relations between the United States and Thailand were strengthened considerably by the events of the war. The close wartime association of Thailand's civilian-administered resistance movement with American intelligence officials engendered mutual admiration and the conviction on the part of the Thai insurgents that U.S. support for the restoration of constitutional government could be counted on. Indeed such support seemed evident as, in the immediate postwar era, U.S.-Thai relations assumed a hitherto unparalleled degree of complexity and intensity. American praise for the democratic initiatives of the civilian government which replaced that of Thailand's militarist collaborators seemed to augur well for the country's future and made America the dominant foreign influence. The simultaneous decline of British investment and influence in Southeast Asia and the success of U.S. efforts to mitigate Britain's postwar claims against Thailand strengthened the American position, and apparently the cause of parliamentary democracy in that country.

Nevertheless, the vicissitudes of wartime diplomacy which had seen the U.S. defend Thai sovereignty against British objections and proposals for an Allied occupation of Thailand, now compelled the Americans to maintain that precarious sovereignty not only against resurgent neo-colonialism but also in opposition to the growing threat of Asian communism. By encompassing a rigorous "autopsy" of Thailand's short lived experiment with constitutional government, which culminated in the usurpation of the civilian regime by military coup d'état, this thesis will examine the internal and external forces which coalesced to undermine the development of parliamentary democracy in that country. It is the principal contention of this thesis that the policies born of the fractious Anglo-American alliance preordained the failure of civilian-governed democracy in Thailand, and that, ironically, despite the close wartime association of the U.S. with the founders of that government, the dictates of American postwar strategy deemed the failure of constitutional rule in Thailand acceptable and ultimately desirable.

Beyond demonstrating the profoundly adverse effects of Anglo-American discord on the emergence of constitutional government, the thesis will seek to clarify the impact of the settlements imposed by the Great Powers on civil-military relations in Thailand. In this respect, the thesis will argue that American policy in Thailand proved dangerously naive and that, by comparison, Britain's policy proposals consistently rendered a clearer assessment of political conditions in that nation. It is useful that the thesis as stated be substantiated by a review of three pertinent questions:

1) In what respects did contact with the West provoke innovation in the political structure of Siam in the years before World War II?

2) By which events during the course of the war was that political structure changed?

3) In view of the ultimate failure of constitutional government and the attendant rise of direct U.S. investment in post-war Thailand under a renascent military regime, how may we assess the effect of American foreign policy on the development of democracy in Thailand? Moreover, to what extent could the failure of parliamentary government be attributed to the imperatives of these policies?

It is the contention of the author that by dealing systematically with the answers to these questions insight may be gained into reasons underlying the failure of civilian administered democracy in Thailand, and more specifically, the circumstances which brought about the fall of the Pridi-Thamrong government in November 1947. Finally, by regarding Thailand as an heuristic model of military governance functioning as a guarantor of ostensibly "democratic" interests, a clearer understanding of the role played by armed forces bureaucracies in the development of "third world" governments may be reached.

From the existing scholarship on postwar politics in Thailand two principal schools of thought emerge. An older and more established generation of scholars of the era has tended to focus on a tiny "political elite" of perhaps one thousand who dominate decisionmaking in this overwhelmingly agrarian nation as the key feature of Thai political life. These scholars have pointed to the "loose structure" of Thai society as well as to the organizational and tactical superiority of the army officers in this elite as the determining factor in Thailand's enduring and authoritarian military rule. Prominent in this group are such scholars as David A. Wilson (*Politics in Thailand*), Walter F. Vella (*The Impact of the West on Government in Thailand*) and Frank N. Trager (*Marxism in Southeast Asia*).

More recently other scholars, among them Frank C. Darling (*Thailand and the United States*), Malcolm Caldwell, David Elliot (*Thailand: Origins of Military Rule*) and Peter F. Bell (*Thailand: The Roots of Conflict*) have attempted to explain Thailand's political evolution in respect to more exogenous factors. These observers have suggested that, beyond the obvious influences of a traditional social structure, recent events in Thailand's external relations must be seen as having had profound effects on political development in that nation. Specifically these writers have pointed out the importance of the Great Powers both in the demise of Siamese absolutism and in the ensuing emergence of military domination. Furthermore, these works underscore the close connection between the imperial powers and the military-bourgeoisie or *compradore* class, who have been the greatest benefactors of foreign involvement in Thailand. It is with the aim of lending historical support to this viewpoint that this thesis examines the influence of the Allies on civil-military relations in Thailand.

CHAPTER ONE - HISTORICAL DETERMINANTS OF SIAM'S DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE WEST

> . . . they [the Americans] bring us what we are most anxious to have plenty of . . . firearms and ready money; and they take away large cargoes of sugar and other produce of this country.
>
> Siamese Minister of Finance
> to John Crawfurd in 1820 [1]

To explain the orchestration of events which brought about the demise of parliamentary democracy in postwar Thailand is to attempt to understand the irresistible and enduring presence of military government, not only as it came to exist in that country, but in many nations of the developing world. Of the Thai it has been observed that, as a people, they possess little capacity for self-revelation. With admonitions of "oriental inscrutability" notwithstanding, it is evident that an examination of the political history of Thailand in evolution, from the deposition of the absolute monarchy in 1932 to the seizure of power by the military in late 1947, will reveal something of the political character of the Thai as well as of the forces which impinged upon them. Indeed, among the factors which have gone into the making of present-day Thailand, her relations with the Great Powers can be reckoned as being of major importance. While it is a commonly accepted cliche that Thailand is the only country in Southeast Asia to escape the yoke of European colonial rule, history shows that this trite observation requires some qualification. Although it is true that Thailand's sovereignty was in fact never questioned--something that is perhaps as much attributable to fortuitous circumstance as to the astute diplomatic sense of its leaders throughout the era of European expansion in Southeast Asia--Siam and Siamese statecraft were subject to a significant variety of external pressures and influences which shaped both the principles and structure of government. In an attempt to understand the demise of absolutism and the genesis of constitutional government in Siam, it is thus essential to appreciate the role played by Western nations in bringing about these political changes.

The arrival of the European powers in Mainland Southeast Asia early in the nineteenth century introduced the concept of fixed state boundaries, an idea that was alien to the traditional practice of Siamese statecraft.[2] Consequently the Kingdom of Siam, which formed a cordon sanitaire dividing French and British colonial possessions in Indochina and Burma, strengthened its administrative control over Chieng Mai and other northern principalities as well as most of what is presently Northwestern Thailand and the four ethnically Malay provinces in the south. The ancient ideals of Siamese public administration which had required only that the government intervene in times of chaos and disorder were replaced by a concept of governmental responsibility whereby the government would act to "maintain the peace and contentment of the people even in times of peace."[3] By virtue of her proctectorates in Burma and Malaya, Britain had found it useful to be the first of the Western powers to renew commercial contact with the court of Bangkok since the cessation of Siamese-European relations late in the seventeenth century. The gradual expansion of Anglo-Thai commercial and diplomatic relations influenced further changes in the organization and practice of governance in Siam. King Mongkut, Siam's legendary monarch, began the practice of employing Westerners as advisors and even as heads of government departments.[4] Significantly, implementation of Mongkut's western-inspired initiatives had the effect of making "converts among the [Siamese] officialdom" which, as Walter F. Vella has noted "paved the way for more far-reaching Western innovations in later years."[5] In finance, the British were the leading advisors and indeed by the time of Chulalongkorn's reign the growth of Britain's commercial interests in Siam had influenced the Siamese government to re-organize its judicial, postal and revenue-gathering systems.[6] Britain, which soon came to be responsible for up to 70% of Siam's imports and the overwhelming proportion of the Siamese foreign debt, was also, through the ports of Hong Kong and Singapore,[7] clearly influential in the administration of Siam's modest export trade. The proximity of the British colonies combined with Britain's pervasive commercial influence to make the pursuit of friendly relations with Britain a necessary goal of Siamese government policy.

In military affairs the Siamese were similarly eager to implement Western concepts. Under the counsel of Germans, Italians and Swiss, military training methods were revised along European lines and cadet training schools were established in the Siamese capital.[8] Yet it remained in the financial-commercial sphere that Western, and particularly British, influence was most profound. By 1884 Britain's economic stake in Siam had reached a combined import-export value of nearly £3,000,000.[9] Moreover, through treaties concluded with the Chakkri court in 1874 and 1883, extraterritorial jurisdiction was extended to British subjects in some Siamese provinces, thereby establishing an important precedent for Siam's relations with Britain and other Western powers. British commercial expansion in Thailand thus had the effect of enlarging the interests of the central administration by bringing Siamese government officials into areas remote from Bangkok which, in many cases, had been only under nominal control of the government. The extent to which Britain held sway over Siam's revised administrative structure was made evident in a proposal made by the Siamese government to appoint British governors to the eastern provinces of the kingdom - a resolution that was eschewed only through the remonstrations of the British consul.[10]

Efforts to modify the structure of the Siamese government's executive also indicated a preference for the British model. Chulalongkorn's authorization of two quasi-legislative bodies--the Council of State and the Privy Council--and his affirmation that the latter had the "power to limit the royal will,"[11] while in no wise diminishing the more absolute power of the monarchy, did have the effects of augmenting interest in occidental political systems and enhancing the role of Western advisors in the Siamese state. The creation of eight new ministries which were organized on a functional rather than a territorial basis and the participation of an expanding class of aristocrats and civil servants in the business of government similarly underscored the legacy of Western influence in the modernization of the Siamese administrative structure.[12] Throughout the reigns of Mongkut and Chulalongkorn the preeminence of Britain in diplomatic relations with Siam was clearly apparent. Although other Western nations were influential in specific aspects of their relations with the Siamese, the British had achieved a solid advantage in most spheres. Moreover, the sheer number of Siamese who had chosen an English education as the surest route to advancement within the burgeoning bureaucracy, made the preference for Britain even more apparent. The influence of European history and politics, in which the decline of monarchical authority is a principal theme, manifested itself in the political activities of the Siamese nobility. A petition demanding the establishment of a constitutional parliamentary system was presented by a group of eleven high officials in 1886. The petition was strengthened by the fact that the four princes who led the group had received their educational training in the West and had had first-hand experience with Western political systems.[13]

In coming to understand the Western, and more specifically the British world view, Siamese of bureaucratic and aristocratic classes were made increasingly aware of the omnipresent threat of outright colonization. At a time when imperialistic claims could be justified on the pretext of the white man's "ostensibly altruistic" mission to prepare subject peoples for the advent of self-government, Western-educated Siamese could not help but become cognizant of the unique and precarious diplomatic status of their tiny nation. These apprehensions were encapsulated in a statement made by a British advisor to the court of Chulalongkorn who observed that:

> . . . the only course open, it seems to me, premising that she [Siam] does not ultimately prove capable of self-government, is for her to give British officers a real control in the conduct of her affairs, and in return to ask for British protection against outside aggression.[14]

Such words were not wasted on Siam's "best and brightest," who in preparation for careers in the military or civil service had been exposed to Western political thought and administrative practice. The accumulated expertise of military officers, many of whom had trained in Europe, and their similarly educated civilian counterparts in the state's civil service, enabled them to discern the inherent vulnerability of an autocratic Siamese state. Although it is evident that Chulalongkorn had attempted to moderate the absolutism of the Siamese monarchy with a well-intended spirit of benevolence, the very concept of a divine monarchy was rapidly becoming unpalatable to the nation's officialdom in both the military and public service sectors. The unorthodox frivolity of Chulalongkorn's son Vajiravudh, who succeeded to the throne in 1910, only served to emphasize to the increasingly Westernized professional classes the anomalous nature of the monarchy in the world of the twentieth century. The growth of Siam's public and military administrative structures and the spread of democratic concepts of government among this intelligentsia would prove to be important factors in the eventual overthrow of the monarchy. The ethos of public service, a characteristic common to civilian and military sectors of the government bureaucracy, combined managerial abilities with the heroic posture of the soldier as political leader, to produce an alliance of value to each group and of consequence to the future of the nation.[15]

Although it is evident that the spread of democratic ideas, especially among the educated classes, was an aspect of modernization which directly paved the way for the usurpation of power from the monarchy, it is also clear that most Western merchants and diplomats contributed little to the spread of these ideas. Concerned with economic and political gains rather than inciting political change potentially damaging to their interests, these individuals, while imparting some knowledge of Western culture, played no part in disseminating the egalitarian ideals and democratic values of the West. In this sense however, Siamese contacts with Americans, particularly American missionaries, were unique. In proselytizing to the Thai populace on the virtues of Christian ideals, missionaries who came to Siam from the United States were notably less circumspect about expressing political views than Europeans had been. While they seldom attacked the monarchy, the missionairies (in their function as teachers) formed the vanguard of a movement which spread Western-style education beyond the narrow realm of the royal family and the Siamese aristocracy or Sakdina. The development of literacy was one goal of the missionaries which facilitated greater exposure to Western ideas throughout Siam.[16] With increasing literacy, especially within the ranks of the civil and military bureaucracies, information about constitutional governance became accessible to a more politically volatile group than princes and their courtiers.

In contrast to the altruism of the American missionary, the pragmatism of the British officials who entered Siam in the capacities of commercial advisors and administrators came to symbolize Britain's predominance in Siamese trade and finance. Siam's dependence on Britain's "good intentions" as protection against the manifest threat of French colonial expansion was another factor which made the Siamese uneasy about their relations with the empire.[17] Thus, as an effort to balance the precariously lopsided British influence in Siam, the appointment of an American, Edward Stroebel, as Chulalongkorn's chief general advisor proved to be a timely decision on the part of the Siamese monarch. This clever balancing of British presence was explained to U.S. representatives with characteristic Siamese diplomacy:

> . . . it was felt in view of the special position occupied by the United States of America in the sphere of international politics, that the appointment of an American would remove from the minds of foreign governments all apprehensions of partiality and at the same time would help Siam to avoid being involved in European controversies.18

What was most significant about Bangkok's decision to employ an American rather than a Briton in the position of chief advisor was the impact the decision was to have on the problem of extraterritoriality. Whereas the British had dutifully aided the Siamese in re-organizing the workings of their public administration insofar as it affected trade and commerce, little had been accomplished in upgrading the country's legal or judicial systems. Stroebel, who possessed a strong background in international law, made these areas of primary concern in his dealings with the Siamese government. Beginning with the abolition of extraterritorial restrictions imposed on Siam, the work of Stroebel and his successors was to give the U.S. a degree of influence disproportionate to America's actual interests in Siam or indeed in all of mainland Southeast Asia.[19] Recognition of the importance of the U.S. in Siam's struggle to sweep aside the provisions of unequal treaties came from the Siamese minister to France, Prince Charoon, who observed that:

> . . . the European nations would never give up their privileges unless there was such a great power as the United States to lead the way and support our aspirations by her example.[20]

Reflecting a characteristic sense of "democratic mission" and an idealism which would long distinguish American involvement in Siam from that of Britain, the influence of U.S. advisors was manifested in other areas of Siamese foreign relations. In the negotiations at Versailles following World War I Siamese representatives, with strong American support, were able to make a persuasive case for revision of treaty restrictions with the European powers.[21] As if to admonish his British and French allies, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson noted that America had relinquished extraterritorial rights "as an act of justice, freely and without price."[22] Acting on behalf of the Siamese, American diplomat Francis B. Sayre proposed in 1925 that Great Britain restore "fiscal and judicial autonomy" to Siam in return for the granting to Britain of a most favoured nation status. Significantly this apparent spirit of "fair play" in U.S. diplomatic relations with Siam was to make a strong impression on the Siamese and did much to sustain Siamese affinity for the U.S. through the vicissitudes of the coming years.

Thus the restructuring of Siamese government which had been brought about by the opening of commercial relations dominated by Britain was, through contact with the United States, given important ideological underpinnings. Not possessing the substantial commercial interests of the British, American representatives were free to implant, without *arrière-pensée*, concepts of individual freedom and popular sovereignty which became central to the movement to abolish Siam's absolute monarchy. In the years leading up to the deposition of the absolute monarchy, the formation of a counter-elite imbued with these concepts and united by a desire to take its share in government decisions saw the monarchy come under increasingly harsh criticism in the nation's press[23] as well as among dissatisfied elements in the military and civil bureaucracies.

As made evident by its attempt to usurp Siam's absolutist regime once in 1912, the military came to consider the monarchy an arbitrary restriction upon the application of plans for an army-led modernization of the nation's government.[24] Increasingly aware of the influence wielded by their counterparts in European states, the Siamese officer corps were, moreover, inspired by the success of army-based nationalist movements in

Turkey, China and later, Japan. In essence, these men sought to implement what they considered a proven method of modernization which would consolidate Siamese sovereignty vis-a-vis the imperialist powers while greatly enhancing the status of the military. Similarly, Siam's civil bureaucracy worked to destroy the barriers which, despite it's education and recognized professional expertise, still excluded it from access to the reins of power. This intelligentsia was particularly discontented with the incompetence of the royal courtiers and felt justified in asserting proficiency, rather than lineage, as the principal criterion of participation in modern state governance. The collusion of these two groups in a movement which subsequently produced the demise of the absolute monarchy will be examined in the following chapter. It is perhaps ironic that the combined influence of British and American diplomats, which, as has been noted, helped to nurture opposition to the monarchy, could not forestall the final eclipse of absolutism and the beginnings of Siam's experiment with constitutional government.[25] The course of this experiment with constitutional governance and the multifarious forces which impinged upon those who sought to implement parliamentary democracy in that country constitute the central focus of this thesis. What follows is a requisite examination of the actors, both civilian and military, as well as the conditions, both domestic and foreign which, in the years following the termination of absolute monarchy, affected a ruling, albeit imminently fractious coalition in Siamese government.

CHAPTER TWO - REVOLUTION, FACTIONS AND THE IMPERATIVES OF FOREIGN POLICY

The peaceful deposition of the Siamese absolutist monarchy in 1932 signalled the beginning of a new era in Thailand's political history. Emerging under the banner of the "People's Party," the coup conspirators ushered in the existence of a political culture which had, hitherto, been expressed only within the ranks of a growing civil and military bureaucracy. The promoters of the coup, inspired by western ideals of "democracy" and "constitutional governance" were motivated, however, more by their desire to modernize the basis of decision-making in Siam than by any clearly expressed or recognizable political ideology.[1] Yet the avowed motive of political modernization also provided an accepted rationalization for the country's martial and bureaucratic classes to assume positions of authority long denied them. The coalescence of a number of strong individuals behind the cause of the People's Party could only briefly mask the divisions within its ranks. Indeed the same factions which united to eclipse a tottering monarchy in 1932, would in the years following World War II, clash in a bid for power that would prove to be decisive. What is apparent from an examination of the 1932 Revolution (as it bears upon an appraisal of the failure of civilian governance) is that many of the conditions which tended to limit the activities of the civilian faction in 1932, were, by 1947-48, even more irresistible in their effect.

David A. Wilson and Walter F. Vella have identified three factions within Thailand's political community all of which were anxious to see constitutional government introduced.[2] Within each of these groups, influential individuals provided leadership which, while lacking a strong ideological framework, collectively sought to improve the country's position, both internationally and domestically. The compromise indicated by the promulgation of the provisional constitution of the People's Party temporarily brought together the members of the coup group and the supporters of the Royal house of Chakkri. Under this agreement, elements of the foreign educated civilian and military elite--the originators of the coup--struck a bargain with the royalists in the interests of a smooth transition of power. It was the desire of the members of all the factions involved to avoid the threat of foreign intervention. Particularly among the civilian elite, who had witnessed the vulnerability of revolutionary governments in Russia and China, the threat of foreign intervention loomed dangerously.[3] Up to that time, Thailand had been in many ways dependent on the good graces of France and Britain in maintaining its precarious independence; hence such fears were not unreasonable. Moreover, the probability that the colonial powers would view the revolutionary regime as a threat to the status quo in Southeast Asia was increased by a report to the British Foreign office which saw the Siamese revolution as a foreshadowing of what could be expected throughout the area. This report noted that "Siam will be affected not only internally but in her foreign relations" and that "ties with Britain would be weakened" with the constitutional regime seeking "a new and powerful ally."[4]

If the perceived threat of foreign intervention alarmed the disparate members of the 1932 coup group it did not prevent them from attempting to direct the course of the revolution towards consolidation. The provisional constitution of the People's Party, however, instead of establishing what was a truly representative government, proposed the achievement of democratic rule through three successive stages. This incremental process as developed by Pridi Panomyong stipulated an initial period of military rule followed by a period of political tutelage, during which a portion of the assembly members would be elected, leading to the final stage of fully responsible constitutional government. Pridi's strategy for the attainment of political democracy included the use of indirect franchise, examination of candidates and the development of popular education as requisites for constitutional governance. Clearly this plan can be seen as having drawn upon the political development strategies of many different sources and while its organizational structure was a modification of existing Soviet and Chinese systems its goal was presumably a western model of political democracy.[5] The influence of Sun Yat sen's three stage development plan, which emphasized the importance of a transitional period of revolutionary party tutelage, and can be traced to the 1905 manifesto of the T'ung Meng Hui, was evident in the political strategy of the People's Party.[6]

Within the executive committee of the "revolutionary" government, eleven of fifteen members were among the original promoters of the coup d'état. However, it was with a view to legitimizing their governing authority that the coup leaders appointed many prominent non-promoters to its ministerial positions.[7] Consistent with the three stage process, appointments to key positions in the armed forces were carefully scrutinized and consequently were occupied only by those military personnel who had played active parts in the revolution. The coalition of civilians, military personnel and non-promoters of the coup was tenuous and made the possibility of stable political transformation from the outset extremely unlikely. As subsequent events would prove, the alliance of Siam's traditional elite with military and civilian elements of the coup group was vulnerable to the external forces which had fostered it as well as to the intense personal rivalries which threatened its future.

The menace of foreign domination, which had for so long influenced the course of Siamese politics, revealed itself as an important consideration in the planning of the revolutionary government. In the 1933 drafting of his economic plan, Pridi, with the support of the civilian faction, reminded the government of its obligation to carry out the changes embodied in the manifesto of the People's Party.[8] This plan, which was to exacerbate the differences within the revolutionary coalition, was composed of twelve sections and called for drastic reforms; the broad thrust of the plan was the message that political change was not enough and that it must be followed by economic and social change within the country. More specifically, the plan was seen by Pridi to be "a measure against foreign economic domination or any foreign sanction which might arise in the future."[9] Implicit in Pridi's plan was the unrealistic belief that, in order to implement it, Siam's existing civil service could be greatly expanded. Although the new government did not possess the training or numeric strength required to initiate the plan, Pridi assumed his strategy could simply be imposed, with the closely related development of public education somehow naturally evolving.[10]

The key criticism of Pridi's plan focussed on his false assumption that there was no basic conflict between the individual and what Pridi understood to be the common good of society. In attempting to merge socialist conceptions of a state controlled economy with the tacit Buddhist ideals of selflessness and altruism, Pridi resolved none of the fundamental problems inherent in his proposal.[11] In justifying his plan of land nationalization, Pridi fell back upon this tenuous marriage of political and spiritual philosophy. He contended that attachment to land as private property was a form of egoism inimical to national interest and that the Buddhist doctrine of non-ego gave strong legitimacy to his plan to bring all land under state control.[12]

Clearly, Pridi was aware of the importance of relating the rationale of his plan to the pillars of Siamese society. By invoking Buddhist precepts as a basis for his plan, he rendered one aspect of it virtually unassailable. His expressed goal of greater economic diversification was likewise widely acknowledged as essential to "modernization"--seen by all of the coup as the very *raison d'être* of the new government. Pridi also provided assurance to Siam's propertied class that they would be excluded from mandatory participation in the plan. While this section of the document may have had the effect of allaying the fears of the royalist oriented _Sakdina_ class, the provision was maintained primarily from a desire not to alienate Great Britain and France. Indeed, upon presenting the outline of his plan for progress, Pridi posed the question to his contemporaries: "which nations would now see fit to invade us?" Later, however, he confessed that "a real fear of foreign intervention prevails widely and this fear discourages our will to go forward."[13]

King Prachathipok's appraisal of Pridi's economic plan proved Pridi's confessed fears to be well-founded. After reading the text of the plan, which included a bill on social insurance that would guarantee state employment to the peasantry, the king was highly critical. What was most noteworthy about this royal criticism was not that it pointed out technical oversights and some rather naive assumptions of the plan, but rather that it focussed upon the probable negative reaction the implementation of such a plan would have internationally. In citing the similarities between Pridi's initiative and the economic planning of Soviet Russia, King Prachathipok suggested that national security and independence were threatened by the very implication of Siamese espousing a socialist economic strategy. The King's apprehensions of imperialist disapprobation were made evident in the conclusion of his treatise when he noted that:

> It is generally known that most countries in the world have turned hostile towards Russia. Do we want them to turn against us too? There is no use making an excuse that what we do is our own internal affair, not to be interfered with by others and

> that we are not to become communist. Those countries are not easily fooled, especially our own neighbors.[14]

Like the King, Premier Phya Manopakorn made no criticisms of the technical approach of Pridi's plan. In fact it is important to note that none of Pridi's contemporaries questioned the contradictions or inconsistencies of his plan.[15] As the chief strategist of the coup d'état and author of the manifesto of the coup group Pridi was held in great esteem within Siam's political community. However, Manopakorn, too, considered his plan most liable to provoke a French or British incursion on Siam's sovereignty.[16] In this view the premier held the support of the royalist faction of the government and a section of the military with the notable exception of Phibul Songkhramm who remained neutral. Pridi, for his part, enjoyed support for his plan within the National Assembly and despite strong opposition within the executive State Council, appears to have calculated the plan's international ramifications. He seemed to have felt that neither Britain nor France would take military action in response to his plan, but would only bargain, threaten and cajole unless outright appropriation of their interests took place.[17] By way of supporting this viewpoint, Pridi observed that in an analogous dispute which had arisen between the British and the Iranians, the British, while vigorous in their representations, had opted for an arbitrated settlement.[18]

Despite these considerations, fear of provoking foreign intervention overcame the high regard in which even the conservative factions of the coup group held the young lawyer from Ayuthya. The King's criticisms coupled with those of Phya Manopakorn and some senior members of the military, placed a conservative dominated State Council in an adversary relationship with the Assembly, where Pridi's ideas held sway. In this highly charged atmosphere the dissolution of the People's Party was imminent. On April 1, 1933, the King issued a royal decree to prorogue the assembly maintaining the decision to be "in the interests of public safety."[19] A new cabinet of eighteen members effectively excluded all prominent civilians including Pridi. Faced with justifying the dismissal of such a popular figure as Pridi and consolidating its somewhat diminished support, the royalist faction of Manopakorn sought to augment its strength.[20] This effort was directed towards a sizable and hitherto uncommitted group within the military which, during the conflict over Pridi's economic plan, had remained passive. The subsequent promotion of some eighty members of the junior military faction, including Phibul Songkhramm, who because of his status within this group was made Deputy Commander-in-Chief, underscored the need for the royalists to legitimize what had been overt counter-revolutionary actions.

What seems clear is that the royalist faction was at this point actually attempting to intervene with the hope of restoring the old regime.[21] Cognizant of the delicate political balance that existed following the expulsion of the civilians, Manopakorn sought to woo the junior military group, led by Phibul Songkhramm, in order to counterbalance the waning support of the senior military group whose leader, Phya Song, had become seriously disillusioned with Manopakorn's government.[22] Thus, having eliminated the civilian faction through domination of the executive branch of government, the royalists now sought to exploit the division between the junior and senior cliques within the military. As a strategy this seemed to make sense. Inasmuch as the senior military group, which had tacitly supported the expulsion of the Pridi supporters, was now on the defensive against the ambitions of Phibul and the junior faction, the royalists stood to gain by playing off one against the other. Moreover, with the resignation of four members of the senior military group from the government, Manopakorn seems to have believed that their influence was receding.

The second coup d'état of June 20, 1933, which overthrew Manopakorn's group of royalist officials was therefore of great significance in the genesis of Siam's political culture. For, although the royalists may have viewed their position in the coalition as that of a balancing force, Phibul Songkramm and the junior military group saw their own as one of "do or die."[23] Presumably abandoned as a result of the resignation of the older members of the military élite and fearful of becoming pawns of the counter-revolutionary royalists, Phibul and his supporters struck at a moment which was both necessary and opportune. In doing so, they effectively eliminated the old officialdom from power while substantially reducing the senior military group, which played no role in this second coup, to a state of powerlessness.[24]

The ascendancy of the youthful members of Siam's military to a position of political preeminence was subsequently strengthened during a last ditch effort by the royalists to regain control of government. Led by Prince Boworadej, the October, 1933 rebellion saw the royalist cause finally put to rest. In this sense Phibul's group can be seen to have affirmed, at least to some extent, the goals of the original promoters. However, the more important outcome of the defeat of the Boworadej rebellion was the recognition the victory afforded Phibul and his confreres in their effort to consolidate power. Broadly speaking, the defeat of the royalists established a trend which, over the next fifteen years, would witness a struggle between civilian and military factions which, as Phibul had observed, together constituted the brain and the force which was the "hope of democracy."[25]

The attempt by the reactionary group to crush the junior promoters of the coup d'état formed a major turning point in Siam's foreign relations. Whereas the royalist faction was extremely sensitive to the possibility of western intervention, the youthful coup promoters represented the most avant-garde elements of the coup d'état who sought to repudiate British and European domination. When it became apparent that the conservative group could not shake off its uncertainty about the revolution nor cast away its traditional approach to government, the younger officers felt threatened both from within Siam and from without, since the governments of Britain, France and the United States had all expressed fervent disapproval of the coup.[26] The Japanese, who since 1928 had sought to lure Siam from the commercial orbit of the British, viewed this change in the orientation of Siam's foreign policy as a great opportunity.[27] Since her invasion of Manchuria in 1931, Japan had formulated her foreign policy with the aims of securing markets for industrial exports and expanding access to sources of strategic raw materials. Closer relations with Siam served both these goals.[28]

For their part, the junior promoters of the coup, whose regime was viewed with trepidation by all western powers, petitioned the support of the Japanese knowing that, even if their revolution was in the long run successful, they would face the threat of economic sanctions from a hostile West. Moreover, Phya Phahol, whose role as senior leader in the second coup was vital, had resided in Japan and was on familiar terms with the Japanese military aristocracy. In view of these circumstances, it was not surprising that on the eve of their confrontation with the royalists, Phahol and Phibul petitioned the support of the Japanese at their Bangkok legation. This event established a trend in which international tensions and domestic rivalries would force an increasingly nationalistic regime in Siam away from the West.

Although some economic linkage between Siam and Japan had been made before the revolution of 1932, diplomatic relations between the two nations had not been particularly strong. Even subsequent to the initial coup d'état of 1932, the Manopakorn regime did not seek closer relations with Japan. Despite its well-known abstention from a League of Nations vote condemning the Japanese incursion in Manchuria--an action widely misinterpreted by the Western powers as having signalled a secret alliance between Japan and Siam--no significant diplomatic link occurred until the Phahol-Phibul coup of June, 1933. Had this coup not been successful in bringing to power a military dominated regime, Siam's foreign relations would not have evolved as they did, but rather would have remained strongly locked within the commercial and diplomatic orbit of the British. The apprehension of external intervention, combined with a desire to consolidate the changes introduced by the revolution, helped to meld the civilian and military elements of the coup group. Pridi's faction of civilians, although discredited by its expulsion following the conservative reaction to an unpopular economic plan, was still acknowledged to be indispensable to the revolution. The warmth and respect with which Phahol regarded Pridi, by several years his junior, was well known. More important, Phahol, who because of his age and experience assumed the position of Premier, did not favour a dominant role for the military in the future of Siamese politics.[29] His sympathy with the cause of the civilian faction and its liberal ideals made him essential to the civilian - military coalition that ruled Siam from 1933-38.

Within this coalition the political progress of Siam was of a slow and tentative nature. As Siam's export trade depended mainly upon the British,[30] with an internal economy resting almost exclusively in the hands of the Chinese, the government sought a revision of the nation's economic structure with the purpose of diversifying and nationalizing its assets. Perhaps more important, the new regime sought to bring about improvements in administrative structure and education as well as the re-negotiation of treaties with the western powers which it was hoped would guarantee normalization of relations. In the pursuit of these aims, the skills of Pridi and the liberal faction, which included many western educated civilians, were essential. Although the military had demonstrated its efficacy in the resolution of Siam's domestic conflict, the demands of international diplomacy enhanced the importance of the civilian group and fostered some brief hope for the success of constitutional government. The subsequent revision of treaties with Britain, France, the United States, Italy and Germany underscored the importance of the part played by Pridi and his faction within the coalition.[31]

The influence of the civilian group within the new constitutional government was also apparent in the implementation of greater government control over European and Chinese commercial interests. Growth of nationalized corporations for the production of important commodities and services illustrated the fact that, although Pridi's economic plan had been rejected, a number of its proposals were gradually being applied towards the aim of strong government control over the national economy.[32] Pridi's efforts to negotiate treaties upon a completely equal basis lent international prestige to the new regime and revealed Siamese foreign policy to be, in most respects, one based upon a thorough-going neutrality. Pridi, like Phibul and Phahol, saw closer relations with

Japan as aiding in the task of modernizing Siam, at least as a counterbalance to the predominance of Britain.[33] However, Pridi's meetings with Japanese leaders convinced him that, unlike Phibul, he held no sympathy with their style of autocratic government nor their military ambitions. Yet, as Thadeus Flood has pointed out, the coalition of the military with the civilian diplomatic front was "of great use to the military clique, since it gave the regime's foreign policy a neutral flavour and left the military free to develop their own peculiar conceptions of the national interest, which clearly involved a much closer alignment with Japan."[34]

Under the administration of Phya Phahol, Thai imports from Great Britain by 1937 had declined to less than one half of her imports from Japan.[35] Despite these losses in trade, Britain remained firmly entrenched in other areas of the Siamese economy. Most of Siam's public debt redemption fund as well as her foreign exchange system were controlled through London.[36] Moreover, the vast majority of capital investment in the tin, rubber and teak industries was British.[37] Finally, the factor which gave Britain the greatest advantage was that, despite the apparent threat of a growing Japanese interest in Siamese trade, Siam's trade with the neighbouring British colonies of Burma and Malaya raised the total British share to about 40%.[38]

Siam's strengthened relations with Japan offered the Siamese government an alternative to what they viewed as reliance on a potentially hostile imperialist power. In the eyes of the military and civilian factions alike, Britain appeared prepared to refute the Siamese right of sovereignty in the interest of maintaining Siam as a protected market.[39] Clearly, Pridi recognized the political risks involved in challenging Britain's commercial hegemony. In ratifying a new trade treaty with Japan in 1938 Pridi sought to reassure the British and was quoted by the London Daily Mirror as saying that the treaty:

> contains no secret clauses; we have made no promises and have no understanding with Japan obliging us to render any kind of mutual assistance. . . . In Britain Siam has a powerful friend, Englishmen have contributed greatly to the modernization of Siam and British domains adjacent to Siam have maintained good neighbourly relations with us for many years.[40]

If Pridi had understood Siam's enhanced relations with Japan to be undertaken only in the interests of economic diversification, Phibul and some of the Siamese military had been affected much more profoundly by the relationship. With the retirement of Phahol in 1938, Phibul assumed the position of Premier and instituted a significant reorganization of Siamese foreign policy. In personally assuming the portfolio of Foreign Affairs, Phibul reserved for himself direct responsibility for relations with Japan.[41] However, in the interests of providing reassurance to the Western powers, Phibul appointed Direk Jayanama, a civilian and close associate of Pridi's, to the post of Vice-Foreign Minister in charge of diplomatic relations with Britain, France and the United States. In this way Phibul could counter western suspicions of his government's pro-

Japanese tendencies while continuing to arouse a strong nationalist spirit in Siam within which the military would enjoy dominance.[42]

Phibul's conviction that closer ties with the Japanese would serve the cause of Siamese modernization was not shared by the civilian faction. Moreover, a significant number of the military also held serious reservations as to the wisdom of the policy. Clearly Phibul himself was hesitant to commit Siam to an alliance with Japan until the Japanese had demonstrated a commitment to decisive military involvement in mainland Southeast Asia. Nonetheless, following Phahol's retirement, Phibul acted to limit the influence of the liberal faction using it only to maintain a veneer of diplomatic neutrality. Thus Siamese recognition of mounting international tensions was to have a twofold effect on the nation's fledgling effort at constitutional governance. Initially, the reluctance of the western powers to lend even tacit approval to the bloodless coup of June, 1932, aroused a sense of doubt among the more conservative promoters of the coup sufficient to result in a rapprochement between this group and the die-hard royalists. The ensuing actions of counter revolution, culminating in the Bowaradej rebellion in the autumn of 1933, had the effect of making the military strongly aware of its decisive power while severely weakening the influence of the civilian faction which, although acknowledged as the driving force behind the revolution, was revealed by these events as lacking any basis of popular support. Siam's subsequent drift away from an ostensibly hostile West into the orbit of Imperial Japan further limited the influence of the liberal group by gradually eliminating the unity of purpose which the Phahol regime had attempted to build into the coalition.[43] As the military became the focal point of a nationalistic fervour, which served to legitimize the new regime, the decidedly neutralist foreign policy of the civilian group grew increasingly impracticable. Despite the fact that the presence of an ideologically acceptable civilian faction allayed the fears of some western diplomats as to the future orientation of the Siamese government, the irresistible drift towards global conflict curtailed the ability of the liberal faction to moderate foreign policy with any real effectiveness. As the fundamental differences between civilian and military factions regarding foreign policy became increasingly pronounced, the civilians' position of firm neutrality became less and less effective in maintaining a balance between the Western powers and Imperial Japan.

CHAPTER THREE - BRITAIN, AMERICA AND THE NEW SIAM: THE VICISSITUDES OF GLOBAL CONFLICT

"Which side do you think will be defeated in this war?
That side is our enemy." - Phibul Songkhramm to his
chief of staff, January, 1942 [1]

During the consolidation of the military's political hegemony Siamese foreign policy appeared to retain a largely neutral character. Many scholars and observers of the era have corroborated this assessment by suggesting that the Siamese decision to form an alliance with Japan resulted largely from external factors over which the Siamese had little control. Josiah Crosby, who was at the time British Minister in Bangkok, explained that:

> In the final resort it was our military weakness in the Far East which . . . led to the alliance between Japan and Siam. Had we been able to hold our own against our adversary, I have no doubt that Siam would have continued to maintain her neutrality.[2]

Crosby and historians such as John Coast in his seminal Some Aspects of Siamese Politics or Donald Nuechterlein in Thailand and the Struggle for Southeast Asia make clear that Siam's alliance with Japan was largely due to the apparent inability of the western powers to guarantee Siam's sovereignty. Clarification of the circumstances under which Siamese neutrality was reluctantly surrendered is vital to establishing that the alliance was for Siam one solely of diplomatic expedience and survival. Yet, since Phibul's decision to ally himself openly with Japan signalled the final breakup of the tenuous civilian-military coalition, a closer examination of circumstances which produced alliance is essential. The alliance of the Siamese military with the Japanese war cabinet was apparent long before Siam's surprising declaration of war against Britain and the United States. What, however, is less clear, is at what point the Siamese liberals withdrew their tacit support for what they had supposed was a mere economic association with the Japanese. Although it is evident that the liberal opposition was powerless at any point after December 1941 to impede the Siam-Japan alliance, the decline of this group's influence in the face of the drift towards global conflict is an important factor in the evolution of Siam's post-war political system.

In April of 1937, the Japanese Minister in Bangkok reported to Tokyo that a rift had developed between the military and civilian factions of the Siamese government. The diplomatic report outlined the contentious issue as focussing upon fundamental differences in political philosophy--a situation in which the civilians clung to a belief in French-British liberalism while the military was increasingly impressed by the economic success of fascist regimes in Italy, Germany and Japan. However, the most salient section of the report dealt with the Japanese minister's observation that the military faction was hoping to make political gains through the annexation of disputed territories along Siam's border with Indochina.[3] Moreover, Ishii, the Japanese minister, had been told by both the French minister and Britain's representative Josiah Crosby that the military faction under Phibul was considered by their respective governments as constituting a serious threat to the status-quo in the region.[4] In making known their apprehensions, the French and British clarified any doubt the Japanese may have held about which faction of the Siamese government was most likely to further Japan's interests. For the civilian group who attempted to challenge the pro-Japanese clique this situation presented one overwhelming problem. Although many Thai, particularly civilians but also some within the military, remained pro-British, nearly all were adamantly opposed to the French. In seizing upon the issue of the Mekong border as a means of promoting his Pan-Thai philosophy, Phibul won an important political victory. Despite the fact that few members of the government, within either the military or the civilian faction, openly advocated rejection of Britain, there was a consensus on the need for a revised Indochinese border. Memories of humiliation at the hands of the French some forty years before gave the policy wide support among the Thai. This further enhanced the popularity of Phibul and clarified the imperatives of Japan's strategy in the imminent conflict.

As the events of the Mekong border dispute unfolded, they showed themselves to be precursors of the trend towards ambivalence and hesitancy in British and American Far East policy. In Septemer of 1940, when the Siamese urged their irredentist claims upon an area of French Indochina comprising nearly 50,000 square miles, western observers viewed the initiative as evidence of a Bangkok-Tokyo conspiracy.[5] Because the Siamese had signed a pact of non-aggression with France and Britain (only three months previously), Siam's actions appeared to be blatantly opportunistic and most probably made at the behest of the Japanese. The reactions of Britain and the United States were, however, inconsistent with such a frank appraisal of the situation. Although as early as July of 1939 the American chargé d'affaires in Bangkok had recognized "a surprising and unmistakable trend towards a reversal of the oft repeated neutrality policy of the Siamese government" and the alarming domination of a pro-Japanese military faction,[6] the subsequent fourteen months would show some remarkable inconsistencies in American policy and intent. Throughout 1939 and most of 1940, President Roosevelt had sought to check Japanese expansion through the imposition of the Export Control Act and other controls aimed at limiting Japan's economic capacity. However, as it became apparent to both isolationists and expansionists in the U.S. government that such measures would not be sufficient to bring about the collapse of the Japanese economy, American policy underwent a significant change. In July of 1940, Roosevelt's secretary Steven T. Early announced a new American position which proposed the establishment of what could be likened to an Asian equivalent of the Monroe Doctrine in which the disposition of France's colonial possession in Indochina would "be decided among the Asiatic countries".[7]

To gain support for its position in the dispute, the Phibul government sought the opinions of Britain and the United States and subsequently Germany, Italy and Japan. At a meeting with the American Minister Hugh Gladney Grant in August, Direk Jayanama, the Siamese Deputy

Foreign Minister, received a noncommittal response, with the Americans suggesting that the dispute should be solved through "peaceful negotiations and agreement".[8] Similarly Josiah Crosby, the British Minister in Bangkok, recommended a policy of restraint, but significantly, told Grant later that he had recommended an affirmative reply to the Thai request.[9]

Thailand, so named by the Phibul regime in 1939 as a refutation of the nuances of foreign dependency inherent in the name "Siam," placed two demands before a crippled France. So long as the Vichy government of Marshall Petain would restore enclaves on the west bank of the Mekong river opposite Luang Prabang and Pakse, claimed by Thailand, and guarantee the return of Laos and Cambodia in the event of what seemed an imminent change of French sovereignty in the area, Thailand would ratify an as yet unsigned treaty of nonaggression. These demands evoked the censure of American diplomats who made clear to the Thai that any attempt to take advantage of France's weakened position to recover territory in Indochina would endanger Thailand's own security as well as the continuation of its friendly relations with the United States.[10]

In contrast, Josiah Crosby's response to the conditions set out by Bangkok was simply that, should the Vichy government agree to the stipulations of the proposal, Britain would "hold no reservations as to an alteration of the status-quo on the existing Siam-Indochina border."[11] Even when the Vichy government announced its initial refusal of the Thai proposal, the British position showed no noticeable change. On September 26th the British representative advised the Thai that although it was in their interest to see Indochina kept under French sovereignty, they would not object to a "freely negotiated" rectification of the existing frontier.[12] This divergence in the directions of British and American policies emphasized fundamental differences in the interests the respective powers had in the region. The formulation of U.S. policy had been largely based upon what had proved to be ill-founded assumptions about the industrial capability of the Japanese war machine and the strength of its association with the Phibul regime in Thailand. When, on September first, Japan presented its request to establish air and naval bases in French Indochina in what appeared to be a bold-faced support of Siamese irredentism, American policy stiffened measurably. U.S. Ambassador Grew, who from his post in Tokyo had advised against the use of strongly coercive measures in dealing with the Japanese, at this point dispatched his "green light" telegram in which he recommended a policy of firmness as the only means of restraining Japan's expansion in the Pacific.[13] The subsequent refusal by the Vichy government to accede to Thailand's claims forced the hand of Phibul who, in order to save face, countered the French rebuttal with threats of war and provided the Japanese with a significant opportunity to intervene.

On November 21 the Japanese government agreed to provide military backing for Thailand's territorial claims in return for Phibul's co-operation in the political and economic development of Japan's co-prosperity sphere.[14] So assured, two days later, Thailand entered into a brief period of hostilities with France, after which Japanese mediation led to the signing of a truce in late January of 1941. French attempts to enlist the support of Great Britain or the United States were fruitless and, from France's position, of little help inasmuch as the French Minister at Bangkok was said to believe Crosby's attitude was that "it was better to have the Siamese in the Annamite chain than the Japanese in Thailand".[15] In submitting finally to the territorial demands of the Thai, the representatives of the Vichy government protested that they had "yielded to Japan, not to Thailand."[16]

Thadeus Flood has pointed out that Phibul's claims against France were made only after the Vichy government had reversed a promise of the previous regime guaranteeing that concessions to the Thai on the border question would be negotiated in due course.[17] In this light Phibul can be seen to have been compelled to preserve his status as a nationalist leader by using force to achieve a goal he had been given to believe could be won through negotiation. Under these circumstances, Japan's offer of support proved indispensable to the Thai regime. Thailand's link with Japan, solidified through Tokyo's backing of Phibul's irredentist cause, was further strengthened through the absence of a definitive policy direction on the part of either the United States or Britain. While Britain was clearly motivated by a desire to preserve its now tenuous influence in the region even at the cost of tacitly approving Thai expansionism, American policy evolved in a very different manner. Whereas British policy was founded upon a legacy of experience and a consideration of the threats to her very tangible interests in the area, the formulation of American policy, impeded by isolationist doctrines, was only beginning to crystalize.

By the time Hitler's armies had consolidated their hold on the European continent in the late summer of 1940 American policy makers, faced with the possible capitulation of Britain, had to consider the logistics of their own national security. Under the auspices of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) these planners sought to answer the question: was the Western hemisphere self-sufficient, or did it require trade with other world areas to maintain its prosperity? Subsequently the location, production and trade of all important commodities and manufactured goods were compiled on a global basis and the self-sufficiency of each major region--the Western Hemisphere, the British Empire, German-held continental Europe and the Pacific area--was established. This method of analysis revealed to CFR planners that the self-sufficiency of continental Europe was significantly higher than for the entire Western Hemisphere.[18] However, the study concluded that by integrating the Pacific areas: "the foremost source of many of the most important raw material imports of the United States," as part of a new region called the "Western Hemisphere British Empire and Far East" bloc, an unsurpassed level of economic self-sufficiency could be achieved.[19]

The implications of the study for the formulation of American policy in Southeast Asia were twofold. On the one hand, the CFR recognized the economic importance of the region's raw materials and observed that "control of these lands by a potentially hostile power would greatly limit our freedom of action".[20] On the other hand, the report, which was issued on January 1, 1941 under the title of American Far Eastern Policy, outlined the strategic imperative of preventing Japanese occupation of the Southeast Asia mainland, which was thought would seriously impair Britain's war effort in Europe.[21] Although these aims were set out to check Japanese influence in the Far East, the CFR members who drafted them concluded that with such a strategy America could protect its economic and strategic interests without becoming embroiled in war. Indeed, many influential members of the Council who wanted to see Washington take a hard line against the Japanese were countered by the assertion that if the U.S. fought Japan, it would be undertaking to preserve the British domination of Asia.[22] American policy towards European colonial interest in Southeast Asia was thus inconsistent at best. Secretary of State for War Stimson's assertion that Japanese landings on the Siamese coast "must not be allowed"[23] contradicted the viewpoint of General George Marshall who recommended a contingency plan in which military action would be considered only should "Japan attack or directly threaten U.S., British, or Dutch territory."[24] Marshall went on to state that:

> . . . in case of a Japanese advance into Thailand,Japan will be warned by the U.S., the British and the Dutch governments that advance beyond the lines indicated (north of 100°E or south of 10°N) may lead to war, prior to such warning no joint military opposition is to be undertaken.[25]

For their part, the British proved even more unwilling to provide any degree of commitment to the protection of Thai sovereignty. As early as August of 1941, Britain's Vice-Chief of Naval Staff admitted that in the necessary reappraisal of the nation's vital strategic interests, the Kra Isthmus would no longer be included.[26] Thus, as Christopher Thorne has suggested, Britain "could offer no substantial encouragement for those liberal elements in Siamese politics" who in the assessment of British Ambassador Crosby were "in sympathy with the democracies in their struggle against the authoritarian powers which included Japan."[27] Britain's policy towards Thailand was further clarified in a communique sent from Lord Halifax to U.S. Secretary Cordell Hull. In this message, sent but a few days before Japan's invasion, Halifax emphasized the possible importance of Thailand in the imminent conflict and indicated willingness to ignore the provisions of Britain's non aggression treaty with the Thai, negotiated in June of 1940, should it become necessary to counter any Japanese aggression. He observed that:

> in July last we informed the Thai government that we should regard the granting of bases [in Thailand] to Japan as an infraction of [the Anglo-Thai non-aggression] treaty. Similarly, although we have not communicated this to the Thai government, we should not feel we could allow the treaty to be a bar to our entering Thailand if a Japanese invasion occurred or was clearly impending.[28]

Halifax went on to note that it would be vital to any contingency plan that nothing be revealed in advance to the Thai who could presumably leak such vital information to the Japanese. While it seems that the

British considered the Thai government to have come under Japanese influence, a clearer understanding of the Thai position can be obtained from an examination of American and British responses to Thailand's earlier requests for military aid. Throughout August of 1941 the Thai government, being fully aware of their strategic position in the region, had petitioned Secretary of State Hull for material aid. Although at this point it had become obvious to those in informed diplomatic circles that neither the U.S. nor Britain would resist a Japanese occupation of Thailand,[29] Hull assured officials in Bangkok that the U.S. government was as strongly committed to Thailand as it was to China.[30] However, in late October, a British proposal to send advisors and artillery to the Thai was vetoed by the U.S. Secretary on the pretext that such a move might incite Japanese aggression.[31] Thus, while both U.S. and British policy-makers perceived the strategic importance of Thailand in a similar manner, neither was willing to take any independent initiative. Britain, which had much more to lose in the event of a Thai alliance with Japan, was hesitant to extend its meagre resources to aid the Thai without the assurance of U.S. backing and material aid. Moreover, it is clear that London held serious doubts about Thai assertions of neutrality. The American position was most strongly characterized by an appearance of benevolent concern for Thai sovereignty coupled with a desire to remain essentially uncommitted. Washington's Far East policy, which had been formulated only in response to the imminent breakdown of access to strategic raw materials, was predicated on the assumption that military action would result only from a direct attack on the U.S., or upon British protectorates.

The Japanese Presence and Government in Thailand

The veneer of Thai neutrality which had persisted largely by virtue of the adroit political sense of Phibul Songkramm was short lived. Following Japan's simultaneous strikes at Hawaii, the Philippines and Hong Kong, the Japanese Minister in Bangkok requested free passage of Japanese troops across Thai soil. Phibul, who was conducting an inspection tour of defence preparations, could not be contacted, leaving Direk Jayanama, the Foreign Minister, to respond to what was essentially a thinly veiled ultimatum. The Thai cabinet which had recently approved a bill compelling all citizens to fight "the invader of the country to the best of their ability or to the last person"[32] pleaded for time to consider their response. Phibul's return to the capital and his ordering of a cease fire brought all Thai resistance, which had occurred most notably in Surat Thani province, to a halt.

It would appear that three elements sat around the conference table while the Japanese awaited the Thai response to their "request." A pro-allied group led by Pridi, a pro-Japanese section which urged active collaboration, and the remainder of the military led by Phibul, who, although anxious to show their mettle, were clearly cognizant of the overwhelming strength of the Japanese. Phibul's break with the civilian group became evident at this point in that, having decided to cast his support openly behind the Japanese, he now had little need to retain the semblance of official neutrality Pridi and Direk represented. In Direk Jayanamas's vivid description can be witnessed the decision which effectively relegated the participation of the civilian faction to that of passive observers:

> Phibul immediately called his cabinet and told them that he and some of his friends had looked deeply into the matter and thought it was best to co-operate to the extent of a military alliance . . . then he had the nerve to tell us that he had already approached the Japanese on the subject of plan two (a military alliance with Japan), and had gone so far as to ask the Ambassador to meet him at the palace within an hour when he promised him an answer. Half an hour later the Japanese, as scheduled, arrived. Phibul then said, 'And this time I will sign, Direk Jayanama, we do not need your signature.'[33]

Phibul's major incentive for breaking with the civilian group on the issue of alliance with Japan was his characteristically militarist desire to augment the national strength. That Japan's "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" offered political and economic opportunity to the Thai was a fact undisputed even by Pridi and the liberal faction. Even at the instance of Japan's demands, members of the civilian group, who were unaware of Phibul's plan for military alliance, made the proposal that neutrality could still be pursued since the Japanese had not asked the Thai to declare war on Britain and the United States.[34] Phibul's decision to halt the fighting elicited a suggestion from Pridi that the Thai had "decided not to go against the Japanese" that they should also make an agreement "not to fight with Great Britain and the United States" thereby following the example of Denmark by offering passage without giving military aid.[35]

Although this suggestion concurred with the feelings of most of the cabinet members, during subsequent negotiations the Japanese stated that additional "economic and financial" agreements would also be necessary. As Minister of Finance, Pridi indicated to his fellow cabinet members that Thai approval of what were ostensibly loan agreements would result in rampant inflation and serious weakening of the national currency. Pridi proposed that the Japanese print their own money, which he called "invasion notes", and which would be redeemable for goods and services but could be nullified after the war thereby limiting the damage to the Thai economy. In this view Pridi was strenously challenged by Phibul who asserted that although the issuance of "invasion notes" may avoid inflation, it would imply a "loss of freedom and sovereignty".[36] The ensuing debate, in which Pridi suggested that freedom and sovereignty had already been surrendered by Phibul's complicity, resulted in a major reshuffling of positions in Thailand's cabinet. Predictably, both Pridi Panomyong and Direk Jayanama were transferred from their respective portfolios of Finance and Foreign Affairs into positions in which they could present no impediment to the execution of Phibul's policy directives. These directives included the signing of a military alliance with Japan that included a secret protocol. It was significant that Direk, Pridi and other cabinet ministers were, at this point, forestalled from resignation at the behest of the British and American ambassadors.[37]

Other members of Thailand's national assembly, who were not informed of the agreement until two days after its signing, were warned by Luang Vichitvadhakarn, Phibul's new appointee to the portfolio of Foreign Affairs, to maintain secrecy regarding the agreement. Vichitvadhakarn directed the Assembly to:

> . . .be careful. If this document appears somewhere, the damage is twofold. Firstly other countries will lose faith in us and secondly, if any foreigner gets hold of it, our future plan will be destroyed.[38]

Clearly this directive underscores the fact that Phibul, although now assured of the probability of an eventual Japanese victory as well as his own preeminence in Thailand's political scheme, was still anxious to maintain some semblance of neutrality. Japans's sinking of the reputedly invincible British battleships "Prince of Wales" and "Repulse" had led him to take the initiative in stripping the last vestiges of power from the civilian faction while forging a strong link with Japan. Even the incentive embodied in the new alliance, which guaranteed the restoration of former Thai provinces and won support in the Assembly, was not yet enough to motivate Phibul to side openly with Tokyo. Indeed Phibul maintained the prerogative of continuing non-belligerence with the Allies despite the existence of the secret protocol with Japan, since the Japanese had done nothing to force a Thai declaration of war on the allies. Moreover, in view of Thailand's obvious diplomatic dilemma, Britain and the United States were anxious to accord the Thai the benefit of any doubt arising from a presumed forced association with Japan.

Thus Phibul's apparent volte-face which came in the form of a January 25th, 1942 declaration of war on Great Britain and the United States was, perhaps, somewhat of a surprise to both the Japanese and the Allies. A government-issued communique justified the declaration with references to "brazen encroachments" and "continuously conducted hostilities against Thailand" and went on to explain that:

> in the past Thailand has been oppressed in many ways by England. The British have done everything to prevent the development of the country, especially in the industrial field.[39]

Significantly the Thai reserved a less poignant and clearly more shallow condemnation of American policy towards Thailand:

> As far as the United States is concerned all Thais should remember that during the Indo-China war, the American government refused to sanction the delivery of a shipment of airplanes previously paid for by Thailand.[40]

While neither the United States nor Britain had regarded the conclusion of the Thai-Japanese alliance as sufficient to warrant a declaration of war, the alliance had enhanced the importance of Thailand's diplomatic representatives in Washington and London. Both Britain and the United States proposed special recognition of Seni Pramoj, a civilian and head of the Thai legation in the U.S. capital, as representative of Thailand's pro-western and ostensibly democratic government faction now reluctantly brought under the sway of the military. Seni's presence in the U.S. capital had, since the tragedy of Pearl Harbour, served to mitigate the bellicosity of the Phibul regime while convincing American diplomats of Thailand's basic orientation towards the democratic countries. Seni's role became pivotal in the first and most fundamental divergence in Allied policy regarding Thailand which emerged following Phibul's declaration of war.

On January 25, 1942 Hong Kong had been under Japanese control for one month, with the fall of Singapore and the Malay Peninsula, described by Churchill as the greatest military disaster in British history, a scant three weeks away. Japanese incursions on Burmese territory from bases in Thailand had, moreover, produced an atmosphere of panic in the far eastern outposts of the Empire. Taken against this background of events, Britain's recognition of a state of war with Thailand clearly portrayed the fact that British authorities recognized Thailand as a fully sovereign nation which was, therefore, in every sense responsible for its actions. In contrast with the situation in the United States, the Thai delegation in London included no one of the stature of Seni,[41] who had shown a willingness to petition actively and eloquently for the recognition of his personal anti-Japanese sentiments as being representative of the Thai state. Whereas Seni's not inconsiderable charm and forthrightness had allowed him to attain in his relations with the state department a status appropriate to that of an ally, the ranking Thai representative in Britain refused a request to undertake a parallel role claiming that he had "no desire to become involved in politics."[42] Hence, while Britain, in a manner consistent with the rubric of international relations, now included

Thailand as one of the Axis powers, the United States, largely on the strength of one man's personality, was moved to accept the "curious anomaly" embodied in ignoring Phibul's declaration. Clearly, Seni's cause was aided by a Chinese recommendation of January 28 which suggested that an American refusal to acknowledge the declaration could show sympathy for elements recalcitrant to the government in Thailand, thereby facilitating the success of subsequent military operations in the area.[43]

In view of the high probability that the Allied forces could benefit greatly from the presence of friendly insurgents in mainland Southeast Asia, the American decision was a sound one. Moreover, studies of the area suggested that Thailand's economic and strategic importance implied the desirability of keeping it a battle-free zone. By virtue of having no existing territorial interests in the region, American policy-makers were afforded the freedom to plan with long term interests in mind. In addition to long term economic interests, America's decision to part with its major ally on the question of Thailand's belligerence was motivated by less pragmatic factors. The United States long valued the fact that Thailand had been the sole independent country in Southeast Asia and was anxious to demonstrate a posture of respect for the values of freedom, sovereignty and territorial integrity to that nation. Indeed, the very quality of the American historical experience in Thailand had focussed on efforts to inculcate a legal and rational understanding of constitutional governance rather than the administration of commercial, financial and territorial interests. An important aspect of U.S.-Thai relations were the activities of American missionaries and diplomats which created great sympathy for Thai self-determination and a corresponding antipathy towards European colonialism. Frank Darling clarifies the circumstances under which these attitudes flourished:

> . . . unlike Great Britain and France, the United States had little or no desire for territorial expansion in Southeast Asia . . . this situation enabled most Americans to promote activities that were generally more humanitarian and altruistic than those of the Europeans.[44]

Britain however was in no mood to play diplomatic games with the Phibul government. Thailand had undoubtedly declared war on the British despite the non-aggression pact of June 12, 1940. Furthermore, Thailand had provided the springboard for Japanese advances into Malaya and Burma. The final insult to British interests was Phibul's eagerness to accept territories in these British colonies--a sure sign of his willing collusion with the Japanese.

With the fall of Singapore, the rift in Anglo-American policy grew considerably. Reports critical of Britain's military preparedness and credibility were circulated widely by American newsmen. Significantly, such reports were often founded upon comments made in the upper echelons of American wartime decision-making.[45] The chief political advisor to General Joseph Stilwell attributed the fall of Burma to a "civil government representative of the worst type of colonial bureaucracy."[46] Secretary William Stimson's comment that the need to hold Singapore was as keenly felt by America as it was by Britain gave license and conviction to even more scathing American attacks on the legacy of British colonialism. Reports in the Chicago Tribune suggested that "the European Imperialists in Southeast Asia, had by their selfish policies, helped to make the United States herself unprepared for war."[47]

At the heart of American criticisms lay the issue of access to raw materials; those strategic commodities--such as rubber and tin--that had been almost exclusively controlled through British and Dutch dependencies in Southeast Asia and were now vital to U.S. military resurgence. Beyond their resentment of Britain's negligent trusteeship of strategic commodities, the Americans were also highly critical of the apparent disdain with which most British were seen to regard Asian peoples. This unpopular image of British racism was contrasted with suggestions that "a natural affinity existed between Southeast Asian peoples and Americans."[48] Clearly, belief in such an affinity, be it real or imaginary, was understood by the Americans to be the essential quality distinguishing them and their cause from that of the colonial powers.

Formation of the Seri Thai and the Allied Resurgence

Japan's occupation of Thailand and Phibul's surprising decision to declare war on Britain and the United States elicited active response from two influential figures in the civilian faction. As has been mentioned, Seni Pramoj, the Thai ambassador in Washington, was successful in prevailing upon the U.S. State Department to ignore the Thai declaration. At the age of 36, the youngest senior diplomat in Washington, Seni had, a scant four days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, made the decision to inaugurate a Free Thai Movement in the United States. The quality of his personal relations with many State Department officials, most notably Secretary of State Cordell Hull, was appraised in Seni's memoirs as having been instrumental in the successful launching of a Thai resistance movement in the United States.[49] Hull's approval of the release of some ten million dollars in Thai Government funds provided the financial support essential to the administration of both the legation and the resistance movement.[50]

Within Thailand Pridi Panomyong and his supporters gave almost immediate consideration to the establishment of a government in exile. They foresaw the capitulation to Japan as a threat to the eventual re-establishment of constitutional government in Thailand and sought, by organizing an alternative government, to demonstrate to the allies that the Thai still cherished the hope of democracy. Yet, however idealistic the appeal of founding an opposition government may have been, the scope and complexity of the logistical tasks implied rendered the plan impracticable. Pridi's most viable alternative was therefore the formation of a resistance group which could marshall political and military strength from sources opposed to Phibul both inside and outside Thailand.[51] Pridi established four initial goals for underground activities. These included taking measures to reduce the influence of the Phibul regime and its support for Japanese policies; direct acts of sabotage against Japanese forces and materiel; a propaganda campaign aimed at promoting distrust between Phibul and the Japanese; and most important, establishing contacts with the Allied Command.[52]

It was significant that the membership of Pridi's resistance group included no army or police officers in its initial leadership.[53] At its inception the movement for Thai insurgence within Thailand had no contact with like-minded groups in the United States and Britain; significantly, such contact was not to be established until 1943.[54] Still, Pridi believed that the establishment of resistance movements in these countries was likely and that a united effort which included these groups was essential to the postwar independence of the Thai.

The Allies - An Escalating Rivalry

In Washington and London efforts began to tap-in to the "intelligence blackout" of the Southeast Asian mainland. Washington's initiatives in this area had begun with the recruitment of a young Presbyterian minister and doctoral student named Kenneth Landon. Landon's expertise in Thai affairs, the result of some five years spent as a missionary in rural Thailand, was seen as a boon to Washington's Office of the Co-ordinator of Information, headed by William Joseph Donovan, a fifty-eight year old

Irish Catholic and millionaire Wall Street lawyer. The Office of the Co-ordinator of Information, shortly to become the Office of Strategic Services, or O.S.S., wasted no time in organizing plans to infiltrate intelligence units into Thailand.

The first major O.S.S. recommendation on Thai policy was formulated by Kenneth Landon in June of 1942. Assisting Landon was Francis Dolbeare, the last American before the outbreak of war to hold the position of foreign affairs advisor to the Thai government. As a policy statement, the recommendation stressed the importance of maintaining the "cordial relations that have existed between the U.S. and Thailand in the past . . . as evidence of good will in the future."[55] The membership of the Free Thai group in Washington reciprocated by seeking to strengthen the impression of the U.S. as guardian and possible guarantor of Thai independence. In his stirring account of the organization and execution of O.S.S. operations in occupied Thailand, entitled Into Siam: Underground Kingdom, Lieutenant-Colonel Nicol Smith relates the prevailing attitude towards the allied powers as expressed by a member of the U.S.-based Free Thai group:

> It's unthinkable that our people will tolerate the Japs for long. They've got sense enough to know that they cannot be their own masters so long as the country is controlled by aliens. Why do you think we fear France, Great Britain and China? . . . Because they are all around us and pressing uncomfortably close. We Siamese resent any nation that imperils our freedom. . . . We are for the United States because she has no territorial ambitions in Asia.[56]

If the Thai had misgivings about British intentions in Thailand, members of the American intelligence community were at least equally suspicious. Indeed, O.S.S. representatives feared that their British counterparts, the S.O.E. or Special Operations Executive, might attempt to exclude the O.S.S. from establishing important contacts in Bangkok on the pretext that the participation of U.S. intelligence teams could endanger the security of existing links with the Thai.[57] This growing rivalry between British and American intelligence organizations was a corollary of an intensified diplomatic rift between the major allied powers. Life magazine in October of 1942 published an "open letter to the British people" in which it urged them to "stop fighting for the British Empire and fight for victory" and went on to caution that "if you cling to the Empire at the expense of a United Nations' victory, you will lose the war because you will lose us."[58] Significantly, this ideological debate was also waged in the ranks of Asian scholars from the respective nations. American members of the Institute of Pacific Relations, many of whom had been pressed into wartime service to provide guidance vital to strategic planning, virulently protested the complicity of their British counterparts in supporting the imperialist cause. At an international meeting of the Institute, held at Mont Tremblant, Quebec in late 1942, British policy in Asia came under sustained criticism from members representing most of the Allied nations. In response , the British delegates, many of whom while acting as advisors to the House of Commons had been strongly critical of their Government's policies, now expressed extreme displeasure at what they regarded as "uninformed and high-flown"

American ideas on this subject.[59]

The effect of Anglo-American polemics on the evolution of the Free Thai movement would be twofold. First, the inability of American and British policy planners to concert their efforts in liberating the Southeast Asian mainland lessened the possibility that a truly unified Free Thai movement, encompassing membership both inside and outside the country, would emerge. Adamant U.S. support of Seni's Washington based Free Thai movement threatened British interests and created suspicion of American motives in Thailand among British policy-makers. As a result, British planners held serious doubts about the potential of a Free Thai movement and from the outset presumed that any such initiative was probably doomed to failure.[60] This meant that any Allied efforts to infiltrate and establish co-operative links with Pridi's insurgent cadreship, known as the X.O. group, would be made at cross purposes. Second, and perhaps even more significantly, this breakdown in Anglo-American understanding meant that the U.S. would now direct its efforts at linkage with the Thai through the Chinese rather than in co-operation with the recalcitrant British. Significantly, U.S. reliance on its Chinese allies was to hamper further the civilian cause in Thailand.

Early in 1943 Pridi's X.O. group was successful in infiltrating a member of its cadreship into China. Chamkat Phalangkun, a member of Thailand's National Assembly and confidant of Pridi, reached Chungking in April with the purpose of presenting a plea for Allied support of the Thai resistance. Also the United States and Britain were requested to evacuate Pridi by seaplane so that he could establish a Thai government in exile. Unfortunately, Chamkat's reception in Chungking proved to be something less than congenial. Upon arrival he was placed in "protective custody" and his Chinese keepers deliberately impeded Chamkat's efforts to establish communication with Seni Pramoj, the U.S. State Department and the British Foreign Office.[61] Since they had relied on their liaison with the Chinese General Tai Li, O.S.S. operatives in Chungking were not made aware of Chamkat's presence until August. Tai Li's wilful negligence had prevented the British and American governments from receiving information about the organization and potential of the Thai resistance at a time when such information might have provided a basis for new contingency plans. The subsequent release of Chamkat's report, which was further corroborated upon the arrival of two other of Pridi's representatives in September, verified that a strong resistance network did in fact exist in Thailand. However, before O.S.S. agents in Chungking could fly Chamkat to Washington, thereby augmenting the co-operative influence of Seni's Free Thai and Pridi's X.O. group, Chamkat mysteriously fell ill and according to Chinese sources "died of cancer."[62] The complicity of Thai Li, who was often called "the Chinese Himmler," in the incarceration and death of Chamkat was acknowledged by the O.S.S. and appeared to motivate the agency's decision to move its operations out of Southern China and out of the reach of the malevolent Tai Li.[63]

Pridi's proposal for the establishment of a government-in-exile produced an intransigent and strongly negative reaction on the part of the British. However, the news that as renowned a figure as Pridi Panomyong was leading the Thai resistance, was encouraging to Free Thai members in both Britain and the United States. Meanwhile, within Thailand, awareness of the increasing frequency with which both Germany and Japan were suffering military setbacks caused Phibul to re-evaluate his diplomatic strategy. Although the Thai military held unquestionable loyalty to Phibul and thereby nominally supported the Japanese occupation, only occasionally did they engage their supposed enemies along the Burma-China Border. John B. Haseman in his study The Thai Resistance Movement During the Second World War asserts that early in 1944 Phibul attempted to make contact with the Allies through a delegation of the Thai military.[64] Haseman suggests that Phibul was aware of Allied contacts with elements of Pridi's resistance group and of the probability of the existence of contingency plans for military operations in Thailand.[65] It was upon the conviction that an allied invasion of Thailand was imminent that Phibul based his plan to move the nation's capital north to Phetcabun, where, he assumed, the Thai military could avoid being pre-emptively disarmed by the Japanese while aiding in Thailand's liberation.

Significantly, neither the O.S.S. nor the S.O.E. was ever aware of Phibul's attempts to establish communication with the Allies. In March and April, the incipient rivalry between these agencies deepened with the news that an S.O.E. team had established radio communication from within northern Thailand. Almost simultaneously London issued a rather ambiguous public pronouncement which, while condemning the treacherous betrayal of British friendship by the Phibul regime, seemed to promise that should the Thai people "make an effort to save themselves from the consequences of the betrayal," Britain would support "the emergence of a free and independent Thailand following the war."[66] American efforts to gain clarification of London's intent elicited no unequivocal commitment on the part of Britain to preserve Thai sovereignty, and this consequently deepened the mistrust with which U.S. policymakers came to regard their British counterparts.[67]

Concern with Britain's postwar commitments was echoed in the ranks of numerous U.S. government agencies. One Institute of Pacific Relations staffer argued that the United States "cannot fight Imperialism in the Pacific by tripping behind every imperialist proposal, we ought to be there first with our democratic proposals."[68] Similarly the State Department's Advisory Committee on Post War Foreign Policy suggested, in perhaps a more pragmatic sense, the reasons that made it essential that the U.S. annunciate clearly its interests in postwar Southeast Asia:

> . . . the rapid rate at which we are depleting vital resources means that our position in the future will be perilous. . . because of the postwar scramble for raw materials it will be necessary for the United States to see that the resources of the world do not slip away under controls and methods hostile to American interests.[69]

Comments by Josiah Crosby, Britain's prewar ambassador to Bangkok, further alienated U.S. policy-makers. Published in International Affairs, Crosby's article, "Observations on a Post-War Settlement in Southeast Asia," challenged the American vision of a postwar settlement in the region. Crosby observed that:

> . . . the major powers among the United Nations will make themselves responsible for the maintenance of peace and international order in the Pacific Region, and it will be one of their duties to see to it that equal opportunity is afforded to all countries to have access to the natural resources of each and everyone of the territories of Southeast Asia.[70]

Unmistakably the tone and intent of Crosby's pronouncement reflected the fact that the basis of the Anglo-American rivalry rested upon necessarily opposing views of how the strategic economic resources of Southeast Asia should be allocated. However, on the question of the future status of Thailand the disagreement took on a more political aspect. With reference to Thailand, Crosby noted that:

> . . . when the terms of peace are dictated, she will thus of necessity be liable to punishment . . . both on merits and as a measure of precaution, the establishment of some form of tutelage over Siam for a period following the termination of the war is now sufficiently indicated.[71]

Although he cited the fact that the elimination of the Japanese and the Thai military faction responsible for the Thai-Japanese alliance from a position of influence in Thailand would bolster the cause of the Siamese liberals, Crosby's observations were interpreted by the State Department as bold assertions of British postwar imperialism.

O.S.S. reports to the U.S. State Department which had underscored the enmity and suspicion in Thai-Japanese relations while emphasizing the history of cordiality between the United States and Thailand noted that any "United Nations attempt to set up a puppet government within Thailand may stir up endless trouble."[72] Moreover the American intelligence agency suggested that Phibul could not be easily overthrown in view of the support of the Thai military and what the O.S.S. estimated to be a "37,000 member bureaucratic elite."[73] In further reference to the British idea of establishing a United Nations administration American intelligence operatives noted that:

> . . . the Free Thai are convinced that a Thai committee or provisional government appointed by the U.N. will not be acceptable to the public. Rather the committee should be made up of men chosen by the Free Thai underground within the country; men whose integrity, democratic views and right to office are unquestioned.[74]

Thus, as the tides of war turned to favour the Allies the Free Thai movement came to play an increasingly important role in postwar planning considerations. The significant effect of Seni's presence in the American capital contrasted with the negligible influence of the London based Thai resistance movement. While the territorial losses of the British at the hands of the Phibul regime had contributed to Britain's intransigence regarding the future of Thailand, American planners recognized the strategic and economic importance of maintaining a supportive, if fundamentally non-committal, attitude towards the postwar aspirations of the Free Thai movement. Inasmuch as the United States had, since the fall of Singapore, found it easier to concert its Thai policy with that of the Chinese rather than the British,[75] U.S. policy came to reflect that reality. Although American dependence on Chinese co-operation had hampered Free Thai efforts to co-ordinate resistance in Thailand with diplomatic initiatives abroad, it had produced a commitment on the part of Roosevelt and Chiang Kai Shek to the postwar independence of Thailand.[76] In view of this commitment the State Department recommended that "the existence of a strong postwar Thailand was so important to the United States that it should not relinquish the initiative to the British."[77]

The Fall of the Phibul Regime and Civilian Ascendency

The climax of the Phibul-Pridi rivalry came on June 24, 1944 when Thailand's parliament refused to pass a government bill moving the nation's capital to Petchabun. Although Phibul undoubtedly had the power to enforce the proposal or summarily dissolve the Thai parliament, it was obvious to most that, in view of Japan's probable defeat, the continuation of Phibul's leadership could only hinder efforts at rapprochement with the victorious allies. Thus it was significant that Phibul's prerogative, based on the belief that he alone was suitable for the leadership, was curtailed when those opposing him made his intention to resign public before he himself had reached a definite decision.[78]

At this point the influence of Pridi was vital as indicated by the fact that upon the fall of Phibul's government, Prince Athit, Pridi's co-regent under the Phibul regime, offered his resignation thereby establishing the Free Thai leader as sole regent of Thailand.[79] Thawee Bunyaketu, a Free Thai cadre, who was to become Minister of Education in the new Thai government, describes Pridi's role in swaying the national parliament against Phibul:

> Pridi impressed it on the members of the parliament that they must change the government, since otherwise after Japan's defeat, Thailand would have no alternative but to pass under the occupation of the Allied powers. A new government, Pridi emphasized, would be in a better position to negotiate with the allied powers and spare Thailand the pains of occupation.[80]

Phibul's fall which followed by a mere three days that of the Tojo cabinet, was regarded with contrasting concern in Washington and London. To that point American attitudes towards the Thai military had been consistent with the assumption that Thailand had been coerced into an alliance with Japan which they clearly resented and were only too anxious to erradicate. As if to verify the essential democratic and peace-loving nature of the Thai, U.S. intelligence reports explained of the Phibul government that:

> . . . although this dictatorship has largely nullified the liberties guaranteed by the constitution, domination by the military however is not inherent in the system of government but is the result of historical circumstances within and without the country.[81]

Of Pridi and the prospects of his resistance movement to form a viable government, the O.S.S. suggested that while

> . . . . he has the prestige that accompanies ability, courage and democratic sympathies, he lacks an effective organization to cope with the military party.[82]

Thus it would seem that although American policy-makers were anxious to exploit their favourable relations with the Free Thai movement at the expense of the British, they clearly regarded the Thai civilians as incapable of wresting power from the military who, it was predicted, "would attempt to forestall demobilization which they expect the Allies to impose upon them."[83]

In the estimation of the O.S.S. the activities of their British counterparts had become by mid-1944 "more political than military in intent."[84] Moreover, in early September Secretary of State Cordell Hull advised President Roosevelt that Britain appeared bent upon using the Southeast Asian military command to restore "its highly unpopular political and economic ascendancy" in the region which included "a predominant influence over the post-war government of Thailand." Hull suggested that the United States should press the European colonial powers to make "early, dramatic and concerted" announcements pledging "the enactment of measures supporting independence for territories in the area."[85]

Many of Britain's publicly expressed attitudes tended to lend credence to the American view. Certainly, far from being a disinterested party, Britain, in addition to her sizable pre-war commercial investments in Thailand, would in all probability look to the resources of that nation to aid in the rebuilding of her war-torn Empire. On the subject of Thai sovereignty the British cabinet remained determined that Thailand be regarded as part of the axis camp until she had "worked her passage home." Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden typified this attitude with a reference to Pridi Panomyong in which he characterized the Thai leader alternately as "a supporter of the Japs" and "a creature who collaborates with the Japs."[86]

Within Thailand Pridi's cadreship took measures to clarify its democratic political orientation while attempting to consolidate the authority of the new regime. Pridi's appointment of Khuang Aphaiwong, as head of state was seen as signalling a return to democratic processes and constitutional governance. Indeed, greater freedom of speech soon became evident in Assembly meetings and in the local press despite the fact that the continued presence of the Japanese occupation forces prevented complete restoration of pre-war civil liberties. As John Coast observes, Khuang was in Thailand a popular figure with social skills appropriate to the predominant political milieu. Of Khuang's populist appeal, Coast observed that:

> . . . he could talk to the people in simple language they understood but he was also shrewd, intelligent and had principles. His wit and humor and informal manners were his main popular attributes; on the other hand he believed in no particular philosophy of politics and lacked sufficient personality to put him in a class with Pridi or Phibul. He was also a pronounced

fatalist.[87]

Under the Khuang regime Phibul was replaced as Army Supreme Commander by the aged but much revered General Yothin, a move that was interpreted by American intelligence as an attempt to further strengthen the position of the civilian faction in Thailand's government.[88] In describing the new government the O.S.S. surmised that:

> . . . the economic and social policies of the new government are in keeping with the democratic spirit astir in Thailand at the present time. This spirit is a renascence [sic] of the democratic movement which framed the constitution in 1932.[89]

Undoubtedly there were appropriately subtle indications that a pro-Western attitude had arisen in the ranks of the new regime in Bangkok: the anniversary celebration Phibul's victory in the Indochina border war was cancelled in January 1945; and Radio Bangkok broadcast commentaries praising the good work of American missionaries and Western values in general. Khuang established a new civil service commission charged with regaining control over official communications from the Japanese.[90] However, the Thai resistance continued to move cautiously to avoid any actions which could provoke the Japanese to take over the government. Thus, while allowing for greater latitude in the co-ordination of the Free Thai movement, the ascendance of the Khuang administration did not alter many of the policies towards the Japanese maintained by the Phibul government.

The fall of Phibul's government coincided remarkably with the issuance of a strongly worded State Department communique to the British. Instructing U.S. Ambassador John Winant to gain clarification on the particulars of British policy vis-à-vis Thailand, Secretary of State Cordell Hull admonished his allies noting that "the absence of a statement of British intentions with respect to Thailand causes considerable inconvenience to this Government."[91] An awareness of the widening Anglo-American rift was brought home to the Thai through the establishment of intelligence links with the Allies as well as by the emergence of resistance members as organizers of the national government. The conviction on the part of both military and civilian factions in Thailand that the U.S. offered the Thai the strongest assurance of post-war sovereignty was demonstrated at Chungking late in 1944. The American Ambassador Hurley received representatives from both the Thai military and Khuang's civilian government petitioning U.S. recognition of Thai non-belligerence and support for the establishment of a pro-Allied provisional government.[92] On January 10, 1945 the State Department instructed Hurley to "take no action implying American support for any Thai group planning to establish a Free-Thai government in exile or similar organization."[93] Presumably this judgement was consistent with the British view which held that political recognition of a Free Thai government committee should await the consultation of British, American and Chinese leaders. Yet a short month later at the behest of the Thai delegation in Washington, headed by none other than the mercurial Seni Pramoj, Joseph W. Ballantine, director of the U.S. Office of Far Eastern Affairs, was persuaded to approve the establishment of a Free Thai committee as an initial step towards the possible recognition of a government in exile.[94]

Presumably Seni's political influence in Washington had been augmented greatly in the course of the previous two years. While at an Institute of Pacific Relations Conference in 1942, Seni had convincingly and singlehandedly debated the British delegation on the issue of Thailand's postwar status. He did the same a year later with some degree of American support. At the 1944 Chicago Air Conference Seni, initially an observer, sided decisively with the U.S. in a bitter tussle with the British who were trying to keep American Airlines out of South and Southeast Asia. A furious London delegation protested that as the representative of an axis power Seni possessed no authority to sign the Conference's convention agreement.[95]

With a similar tenacity Seni defended Thailand's cause in the American press. In a letter to Fortune magazine Seni eloquently refuted an article condemning alleged Thai despotism by pointing to the distinguished legacy of American political advisors in Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs as evidence of the relative importance his government had given to western democratic influence. Seni went on to argue that the difficulties which his country's government had encountered in modernization largely stemmed from:

> . . . restrictions of trade and the jurisdictions of law courts which were imposed upon us by colonial powers . . . just as they

> were upon China. . . but surely that historical fact furnishes no grounds for today denying to Thailand her right to independence?[96]

In spite of the impressive diplomatic initiatives of Seni's personal branch of the Free Thai, his organization's contact with Pridi's X.O. group remained virtually non-existent throughout the greatest part of the war. Despite efforts by both groups to establish communication links for concerted action the success of these efforts depended to a large extent on the reciprocal collaboration on the part of British, American and Chinese policymakers. The British had consistently expressed their reluctance to support any Free Thai movement abroad which had no connection with the X.O group in Thailand. Even when Pridi succeeded in exfiltrating two of his agents, the British complained that they still had no substantive proof that a viable resistance movement existed. More important, the American decision to attempt to establish its O.S.S. link through co-operation with an inexplicably treacherous Chinese ally prevented the meeting of Seni and Chamkat Phalangkun, Pridi's politically astute cadre--a meeting which might have provided the proof the British required.

As the end of World War II drew near, the strength of Pridi's Free Thai movement was augmented considerably. Police General Adul Aduldejurat complied with Pridi's requests for up-to-date information on Japanese troop movements which was in turn relayed to the Southeast Asian command centre at Kandy, Ceylon. Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the army, Sinre Yodarak, was similarly in close collaboration with Pridi in preparation for a possible military showdown with the Japanese coinciding with the expected Allied offensive in the region. Pridi further entrusted Direk Jayanama with the responsibility of exploring the means to consolidate Thailand's diplomatic relations with the Allied powers following the Japanese defeat, and placed Thawee Bunyaketu in charge of resistance operations. Despite the fact that the Allied command urged Pridi's Free Thai against precipitating armed clashes with the Japanese, the Thai resistance group, which now numbered an estimated sixty thousand, was prepared to conduct operations against the Japanese invaders calculated to enhance Thailand's bargaining position in postwar negotiations.

The Thai resistance movement had thus evolved amidst a breakdown in Allied policy which at once hampered and encouraged Pridi and his cadre. American ideals of democracy and anti-colonialism, drawn out by the remonstrations of Thai ambassador Seni Pramoj, clashed with the intransigence of the British to produce an intricate diplomatic balance. England's approach of apparent indifference to the resistance movement meant that approval of potentially valuable Thai initiatives would be witheld unless there existed convincing tactical as opposed to diplomatic reasons for recognizing the civilian government. In turn, the leadership of the resistance movement was quick to recognize the growing rift in Anglo-American policy-making and to exploit it to the advantage of Thailand. Both Pridi Panomyong and Seni Pramoj viewed the resistance movement as a means for attaining political goals in the postwar era; and as that time grew near, the most vital aim of the movement became the achievement of political legitimacy. The Americans, for their own reasons, gave at least tacit support to this aim. In the pursuit of these ends the continued divergence of British and American policies, personalities and ideals was to be of great consequence.

CHAPTER FOUR - CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE CHALLENGE TO THAI SOVEREIGNTY IN THE POSTWAR ERA

> . . . one principal obstacle to the growth of parliamentary democracy is the paramountcy of financial considerations . . . this makes for a split in the ranks of civilian politicians and extends opportunities to the military elite to dominate politics.[1]

The appointment of Khuang Aphaiwong as government leader was a testimony to the intricate balance of power that would characterize Thailand's postwar politics. For Pridi, the choice of Khuang, a wealthy landowner with strong populist appeal, as leader of the cabinet, was a means of easing potential domestic tension that might have arisen from the sudden expulsion of Phibul. That Khuang was acceptable to Phibul and his followers was therefore obviously important. However the fact that Khuang's new government reaffirmed the Six Principles of the original People's Party platform indicated that Pridi's support for Khuang was not merely political but grounded in the ideological convictions of the regent.

Khuang's regime faced numerous difficulties many of which could be attributed to the circumstances of the Japanese presence. Attempts to lift some of the economic controls imposed by Phibul had triggered a wave of rice hoarding, black market activity and speculation on an inflated Thai currency. Similarly, efforts to return to a sounder monetary base, such as the calling in of all thousand baht notes, created a near-panic situation. Despite this economic uncertainty, a fervent opposition to the Japanese coupled with the desire to preserve a tenuous national sovereignty engendered relatively harmonious relations within the Thai cabinet and assembly. By allowing politicians who had fallen into disfavour under Phibul's regime to return to active participation in affairs of state, Khuang sought to broaden the basis of support for the new regime as well as to avail the government of the education and political acumen of many prominent citizens. Moreover, in an effort to win over the bureaucracy, Khuang authorized salary increases for the lower strata of civil servants, a group whose economic position had been seriously eroded during Phibul's campaign to expand the Thai military.[2]

Still, devaluation of the Thai currency and its steady depreciation over the course of the Japanese "occupation" had encouraged speculation and the attendant corruption of underpaid government officials. Dishonesty was further encouraged by the naivete of the Japanese occupation forces who were willing to pay highly inflated prices to wily Thai merchants eager to cash in on the war. A shortage of goods, the result of the Allied blockade and Japan's increasingly weakened shipping capacity, had, by late 1943, driven up the cost of living by nearly three hundred percent.[3] Phibul's early attempts to undermine the commercial influence of Thailand's Chinese minority had further contributed to the legacy of corruption inherited by the fledgling civilian regime.

The problem of corruption also affected the Free Thai movement. As the resistance came to play a larger role in the war effort following the establishment of communication links with the Southeast Asia Command, the demand for new recruits increased dramatically. This necessitated the recruitment of personnel whose reliability was often of a questionable nature, criminals and ex-collaborators anxious to finish the war on the "right side" infiltrated the ranks of the resistance. Pridi, who had augmented his personal power through the ideological issue of the resistance was eager to demonstrate to the allies the effectiveness of his organization. He was also apprehensive that his force would be preempted by the Japanese from taking part in the imminent Allied offensive thereby negating a fundamental political goal of the resistance. A major crisis arose in 1945 when the Japanese, who since the start of the war had drained the Thai with a series of "loan requests," asked the Khuang government for an amount totalling several hundred millian baht. Aware that agreement to the "loan" would crumple an already weak Thai economy, Pridi contacted the U.S. State Department and petitioned American support for an open resistance to the Japanese occupation force in order to prevent national bankruptcy.[4] Pridi also expressed the hope that the United States would unilaterally declare its recognition of Thailand's postwar independence and support its membership in the United Nations.[5]

The American response was uncharacteristically measured. Acting Secretary of State Grew cautioned the Thai regent against any "premature overt action" which was unco-ordinated with the plans of the Southeast Asia Command and suggested only that the Thai government attempt to stall on the payment of the Japanese loan request for as long as possible. Lord

Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Commander of the Southeast Asia Command was also alarmed at Pridi's proposal as his forces were not yet prepared to launch an offensive into the region. Realizing that the Thai resistance was more valuable as an intelligence source than as a military command, Mountbatten, acting through the U.S. State Department, had O.S.S. Lieutenant-Colonel Nicol Smith dispatched to Thailand's "underground kingdom" to dissuade Pridi from his plan of action. Smith describes the instructions he received from the State Department's Chief of South East Asia Affairs, Abbott L. Moffat:

> The most important thing for you to impress upon the Siamese regent is that he must not take any overt action until Supreme Commander Mountbatten gives the word. The British are planning an attack. Find out from Mountbatten the date they have set for it and persuade Ruth (Pridi's code name) to hold off his uprising to co-ordinate with that date.[6]

Significantly, neither the British nor the Americans questioned Pridi's assessment of the economic debacle faced by the Khuang government nor the Free Thai force's ability to marshall an effective insurgency. Mountbatten's scheduled November offensive offered no comfort to Pridi, and Smith's assertion that both the United States and Britain gratefully acknowledged Thailand's economic sacrifice in support of the Allied cause did nothing to mitigate the severe strain the situation placed upon the civilian government. An economy which until 1941 had been based upon a prudent expansion of the money supply only in response to actual expansion of trade and production was laid waste as consequence of the Japanese presence. The issuance of baht against yen credits, particularly during the final nine months of the war, accounted for eighty percent of the inflationary increase in note circulation.[7] Moreover the production of rice, the staple of the Thai economy, by 1945 had fallen to about three-fifths of its pre-war level.[8] What was perhaps more significant was that flooding and damage to paddy fields had reduced the total cultivated land area by twenty percent. Similarly, Thai exports of tin, rice and rubber plummeted as the commercial activities of British and Australian companies ceased in the face of international hostilities. Since the Japanese required neither rubber nor tin, as they were readily available from Malaya or the Dutch East Indies, production of these commodities dwindled in each case to less than ten percent of pre-war capacity. Efforts by the Phibul government to set up state-run rubber and minerals companies proved ineffective and resulted in Khuang's regime undertaking to re-establish some degree of private ownership in the country's resource industries.[9] The consequent elimination of government officials from commercial enterprises was seen as a positive step by American observers as well as by private interests in Thailand.[10]

By the summer of 1945 Khuang's government, although not successful in improving Thailand's economic conditions, had to a large extent succeeded in returning civilian affairs to civilian hands. The abolition of Phibul's fascist-oriented cultural policies, which had glorified militarism, did much to restore the freedom of expression on an individual level and in the country's media. As has been mentioned, Khuang also proved adept at securing the support of the Thai bureaucracy. The army, however, proved to be a decidedly different case. Khuang's ascendency signified the first time a civilian had led the government in more than a decade. The senior military officers could only reconcile themselves to civilian control if convinced of the ability of the civilians to secure favourable terms from the Allies. In this context the role of the Free Thai came to be of increased importance. If the administration of Khuang, blessed with the intellectual support of the popular Pridi, could through negotiation defuse the threat of foreign domination, the allegiance of the military rank and file could indeed be counted on. Aside from his avowedly economic motives, Pridi's proposed strategy of initiating armed resistance against the Japanese strongly suggests that Pridi considered an armed demonstration of Free Thai patriotism instrumental to the attainment of strong political legitimacy in the postwar era.

In examining what it termed the "economic and social basis" of Thailand's civilian government, American intelligence sources observed that the new regime had "raised salaries and scrutinized the performance of minor officials."[11] Moreover, the O.S.S. spoke approvingly of Khuang's efforts to "eliminate petty graft" and to investigate the expenditures of the Phibul regime which, it was noted, resulted in "a large group of military officers and officials being placed on the retired list."[12] Yet while the O.S.S. assessment of the new Thai government recognized the "democratic value of proposals initiated to form political parties and to establish programs for the political education of the rural populace", it noted that attempts to broaden the basis of political involvement in

Thailand was a potentially divisive issue:

> . . . it is possible that developments may take place which will create groups hostile to strictly democratic government in Thailand. One such group might consist of individuals connected with state or quasi state owned industries.[13]

In this thinly veiled reference to those members of Phibul's military clique who in the wake of the European expulsion from the region, had assumed positions of importance in state-run industries, the report made cogent observations on the state of Thailand's postwar political prospects. The expansion of the military's functions under the Phibul regime had come to include involvement in banking, finance and the administration of municipal governments. During the war expenditures for the ministries of defence, communications and the interior had grown by an average of three hundred percent.[14] Thus when the Khuang administration came into power salary allowances for federal and municipal civil servants had come to encompass nearly half of the national budget.[15] What was more significant, however, was that Phibul's efforts to integrate industrial production under the auspices of the military state, brought his interests into collusion with those of Thailand's propertied or compradore class--a group to whom wealth and power had accrued during the Japanese occupation.

Japan's offer of surrender to the Allies on August tenth 1945 was not announced in Bangkok until two days later. Ambassador Yamamato Kumachi informed Khuang of his government's decision. Khuang's response, which asserted that since Thailand had not been previously consulted, she would follow an independent course, made no mention of his government's opposition to Japan nor of its support of the Allied cause. A subsequent Japanese request that the Thai government issue an "order to Thai soldiers and civilians to refrain from insulting Japanese personnel"[16] was similarly responded to with tact and amicability. Yet it was evident that the Japanese surrender had caught the civilian government by surprise. Convinced that the allies would look with disfavour upon any government which could be seen to have abetted the Japanese cause, Khuang's government hastily resigned. Pridi issued a proclamation in which he repudiated the Thai declaration of war against Britain and the United States as well as Thai claims to British territories in the strategic Malay peninsula.[17] Significantly, the Regent's disavowal included no mention of the former French territories along Thailand's eastern border which had come under Thai control prior to the commencement of hostilities. Admittedly, Thai blood had been shed in support of what Pridi recognized was an immensely popular cause against what many Thai regarded to be an unduly repressive colonial regime. Indeed to return to France territories upon which Thailand had staked historical claim would have been a move calculated to undermine the unity crucial to the success of the civilian regime.

The United States recognized that Tokyo's sudden capitulation had come "before the Thai were in a position to change their belligerent status."[18] American sympathies for the Free Thai now clearly came to fore. Secretary of State James Byrnes wasted little time before expressing the U.S. point of view:

> . . . for a number of months the resistance movement has been prepared to commence overt action against the Japanese. For operational reasons this government and the British government requested that such action be deferred. It is only because of this expressed request that the resistance movement did not begin open fighting for the liberation of their country before the Japanese surrender made such action unnecessary . . . [thus] we have regarded Thailand not as an enemy but as a country to be liberated from the enemy.[19]

Byrnes' assessment of Thailand's wartime culpability notwithstanding, American interests in Thailand's postwar status encompassed more than a healthy respect for the diplomatic initiatives of the Free Thai. Although the U.S. Secretary was responding to the implicit threat to Thai sovereignty in British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin's contention that Thailand's postwar status was contingent upon the way in which (Siam) met the requirements of Britain,[20] the obvious Anglo-American cleavage had a distinctly non-ideological dimension. The United States had long been wary of a resurgent European colonialism such as had occurred during the interwar years, restricting U.S. commercial access to strategic commodities.[21] Kenneth Landon's comments indicate the growing significance Thailand assumed in the Americans' postwar economic scheme;

> . . . with our interests in expanding export markets after the war an independent Thailand may be of particular importance to the United States as the only market in Southeast Asia not complicated by colonial relationships.[22]

In his contacts with O.S.S. personnel, Pridi himself had consistently expressed concern that Great Britain might establish military bases on Thai soil and refuse to withdraw.[23] The O.S.S. had in turn confirmed that "high British officials" regarded peninsular Thailand to be "of such strategic importance that it should come under British control" and noted with disapprobation that:

> . . . it is also probable that the economy of the Thai peninsula attracts British interests in that Thailand produces about five percent of the world's natural rubber and about ten percent of the total tin and an important quantity of tungsten.[24]

Despite obvious concern that Britain had made no guarantees as to Thailand's independence or territorial integrity, the State Department had, in fact, undertaken to establish some common views on the issue. Noting that a clear understanding had not been reached on several points including: consideration of a Thai application for membership in the United Nations; future British economic and commercial policies in the area: and most significantly, agreements on postwar control measures, the Americans petitioned London for clarification of British intentions. On August twentieth the State Department was informed of London's intention to negotiate unilaterally with Bangkok.[25]

In the Thai capital Khuang's cabinet had been replaced by what was undoubtedly designed to be an interim government. Thawee Bunyaketu, a Pridi supporter and chief of the Free Thai's underground operations unit assumed the premiership with a cabinet of only five members.[26] Pridi's appointment of Phung Suphachalasai to a cabinet post was interpreted as a concession on the part of the Thai regent to those recalcitrant elements in the country bitter at the civilian takeover. Thawee's memoirs clarify the strategy of the civilian faction at this juncture:

> . . . Khuang was not directly associated with the Free Thai movement in Thailand and the Allies might reason he had headed the Thai government at a time when Japan exercised some sort of sway over our country. I was, in contrast, the chief of the underground guerillas, and I was made Prime Minister solely to soothe the sensibilities of the Allied powers.[27]

Thawee's comments make clear that the Thai government was unsure as to the perceived status of the Khuang administration. Although American diplomatic sources had praised the democratic initiatives of Khuang's government, Pridi clearly intended to act to strengthen further the image of the civilian administration. Thus, a decision was made to appoint Thailand's minister in Washington to the premiership immediately upon his return to Bangkok. In this way it was expected that U.S. support for Thai independence would be enhanced while allowing the leadership of the Free Thai movement to disclaim accusations that the resistance had only been a means of wresting political power.[28]

Unbeknownst to Pridi and his followers, prior to his departure for Bangkok, Seni had given a commitment to the Allies that Thailand would provide, free of charge, 1.5 million tons of rice which the Allies claimed was urgently needed to relieve the war-ravaged colonies of Southeast Asia. Knowledge of the agreement, which reached Pridi days before Seni's arrival, produced considerable consternation in the Thai capital. Thawee argued that in view of the country's already seriously depleted rice stocks the government could hardly accede to such an arrangement. Furthermore, Thawee expressed strong misgivings that such an agreement would appear to be a payment of indemnity--thereby implying the culpablity of the present Thai government.[29] For Pridi's part, Thawee's objection to depleting existing stocks of rice seemed valid; however the politically adroit regent was reluctant to undermine the credibility of the man who was presently to assume the premiership by repudiating the agreement in principle. Suggesting that such a conciliatory gesture could ingratiate Thailand to the Allies, Pridi agreed to support the offer but to leave the actual amount in question.

Pridi's decision to promote Seni's accession to the premiership was to be of great consequence in the future of civilian government in Thailand. Unlike Khuang or Pridi, Seni could command no real basis of popular support. As a member of the Sakdina class, Seni had close ties with members of the country's royalist aristocracy who had opposed the Pridi-inspired overthrow of the monarchy. Having passed the most turbulent years of Thai political history abroad, Seni had little opportunity to appraise the current state of the government's intricate machinations. It was on the basis of these observations and others that Khuang challenged Pridi's backing of the former Ambassador as Chief Minister. While Khuang's opposition to Pridi's manipulation of government created some degree of disaffection in the ranks of the civilian faction, the Thai were faced with a much more important problem. Britain had presented a list of twenty-one demands which outlined the means by which Thailand would be able to, in the words of Josiah Crosby, "work her passage back" into the good graces of the Allies. In principle the twenty-one demands explained how the Thai government would be expected to function in facilitating the disarmament of the defeated Japanese while providing material support for the Allied forces now poised to enter the country. The most salient feature of the British submission prescribed the acceptance by the Thai of an Allied military mission which would be charged with overseeing the reorganization of the nation's armed forces. However, other provisions of the proposed agreement were equally derogatory to the Thai. All major resource exports were to be regulated under joint Allied supervision.[30] Furthermore, Thailand was to admit liability for all damage incurred to Allied property during the course of the war and to be responsible for full compensation.

The political aspects of the British demands made clear the British intention to preserve Britain's commercial preeminence in the region. Thailand's free contribution of 1.5 million tons of rice was essential to the recovery of British colonial possessions in Malaya and Burma. Moreover, the supplementary British demands that the Thai agree to negotiate new commercial treaties, as well as to allow full freedom for British business interests to participate in the Thai economy, further clarified Britain's intention to re-establish commercial hegemony in the region. Finally, delivery of the previously agreed rice levy of 1.5

million tons was to be supervised by an Allied control unit operating inside Thailand.[31]

The State Department's response to the all-encompassing nature of Britain's claims against Thailand was swift and decisive. Announcing that it considered the commercial restrictions imposed on Thailand by the British to be "a definite impairment of Thai sovereignty" that ran "contrary to the spirit of the United Nations charter," the Americans pressed their allies for clarification on the intent of the twenty-one demands.[32] Of particular concern to the State Department was the issue of the establishment of a joint military mission, in which the United States clearly expressed its unwillingness to participate, and the question of the rice levy in which the U.S. took exception to the size of Britain's proposed indemnity. Both measures were interpreted by American diplomats to be unduly harsh restrictions on Thai sovereignty. With respect to the British contention that the stationing of a joint military mission in Thailand would insure the future security of the strategic Kra isthmus, the U.S. expressed strong reservations noting that this demand contradicted a British statement of November 1944 which deemed it necessary only that Thailand accept those postwar security arrangements judged essential to the peaceful functioning of the international political system in which the Thai themselves would collaborate.[33]

The observations of the U.S. Commissioner in India who was in attendance at the Anglo-Thai negotiations, exacerbated the growing distrust in Anglo-American relations. Angrily noting that British negotiators at Kandy, Ceylon had asserted American acquiescence to a proposed Allied military occupation of Thailand, George Merrell cabled newly-appointed U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson information that:

> Mountbatten gave the Thai 48 hours to sign sweeping economic agreements under guise of military arrangement . . . . [The] agreement makes obvious British intention to treat Thailand as an enemy country to be occupied and controlled. O.S.S. and War Dept. have details [of] proposed agreement which does not conform to U.S. policy. If [the] U.S. cannot effectively oppose such harsh terms by Allied commander, U.S. prestige will be seriously impaired and U.S. goodwill in Thailand sacrificed to the detriment of overall policies towards Asiatics and the Pacific.[34]

The cause of "U.S. prestige", engendered by the rapport which had developed between American O.S.S. operatives and the Free Thai, thus came to influence Anglo-American relations. U.S. objections to Britain's proposals for a settlement with the Thai government made apparent to Thai negotiators at Kandy that the Americans could be played off against their Allies. By October, the intransigence of American diplomats caused the British to modify their original demands. Of the two most apparently divisive issues, Britain's proposal to establish an Allied military mission in Thailand was changed to require only that the Thai agree to collaborate in any international security arrangements initiated by the United Nations.[35] Similarly on the question of imposing restrictions on Thailand's economy and trade the British explained that such provisions were only "intended to bridge the gap" until freely negotiated commercial treaties with the Thai could be put in place.[36]

However the question of the rice levy remained unclear.

The implications of the Anglo-American diplomatic exchange for the state of government in Thailand were not inconsiderable. While mutual suspicion and recrimination coloured relations between ambassadors and their respective foreign affairs ministries, in Thailand itself relations within the ruling civilian faction grew unsteady. By the time of Seni's arrival in Bangkok, Britain had relinquished its original "21 demands", which had been extremely vague in their treatment of specific issues, in favour of a 53 point set of demands, which, in response to American objections, proved to be as specific as the former had been general.[37] Although, as mentioned above, the issue of the proposed rice levy remained unsettled, the new British proposal no longer stipulated the requirement that Thailand receive a military mission. This was to prove to be of great consequence for as John Coast has observed: "no precaution from abroad was to be taken against future attempts by the army to interfere in politics . . . [hence] the path to democracy would still have an army road block across it."[38] Such an eventuality was, however, not so clearly reasoned by civilian leaders in the fall of 1945. The streets of Bangkok were indeed the epitome of postwar chaos. Chinese in the Jawarat area of the city had taken advantage of China's victorious status as one of the allied "Big Four" powers to antagonize local Thai residents.[39] The entry of a detachment of British Gurkhas into the city combined with the presence of nearly 30,000 Japanese troops created a potentially volatile situation for the fledgling civilian administration.

In this atmosphere of incipient anarchy Seni Pramoj assumed the leadership of a cabinet which had been hand picked from Pridi's Free Thai cadre. From the outset Seni found his policies to be incompatible with those of Pridi's associates, most of whom he found unwilling to co-operate with him. On the subject of a settlement with the British, Seni's views fell into fundamental conflict with those of the regent. Feeling that Pridi sought to undermine his status as a national hero, Seni criticized Pridi's assertion that a speedy conclusion of the terms of an Anglo-Thai treaty was essential. Seni commented that;

> . . . the British appeared to have misled or pursuaded Pridi that it was a matter of prestige on their part that the treaty should be signed without delay, and that the provisions could be revised at the time of implementation.[40]

Clearly, the influence of Seni's close association with American interests is reflected in his assessment of Pridi's policy. Whereas Pridi was prepared to react with expedience to British demands in an effort to preempt what he perceived as an obvious threat to Thai sovereignty, Seni was more aware of the extent to which the U.S. would support the Thai in their negotiations with the British. For Pridi, acceptance of the "53 points" meant that the Thai would be free to pursue steps towards the re-establishment of constitutional democracy without the encumbrance of foreign interference. To the extent that he was willing to accede to these demands, Pridi seemed to Seni to be willing to jeopardize the nation's economic and territorial independence for the aggrandizement of the former's personal power.

Divisions within the Thai cabinet on the question of acquiescence to British demands were noted by American chargé d'affaires Charles Yost, stationed in Bangkok. Yost observed that the Thai had sought clarification of Britain's intentions regarding the postwar administration of the region, upon which the British negotiators were remaining surprisingly vague.[41] Subsequently, the U.S. diplomat advised Secretary of State Acheson that "a threat to democratic Thai government was imminent" as a result rumors currently being circulated by "British officials" in the Thai capital to the effect that the present government was "standing in the way of economic normalcy and stability."[42] As if to underscore British duplicity Yost stated that:

> . . . it is generally known that the British are making efforts through pro-British Siamese to organize a party with political influence but have as yet secured no outstanding leaders. . . . The British dislike revolutionary party leaders without exception and regard their regime as inimical to welfare of Siam and would like to see a change for the better. . . it (thus) becomes increasingly clear that Britain is using peace terms to strengthen its already preponderant political and economic influence in Siam.[43]

If the Americans were alarmed at the threat to what they perceived to be a democratic government in Thailand, Pridi and his associates were perhaps more urgently concerned with impressing upon the Allies the viability, strength and even the political legitimacy of the Free Thai movement and the government it supported. Sensitive to British claims that the Free Thai organization was composed of mere opportunists seeking to extract political gain from participation in an overrated and essentially unproven resistance movement, Pridi, Thawee and other civilian leaders acted to demonstrate the magnitude of, and popular support for the movement. Ten thousand members of the Free Thai resistance were asked to assemble in fully armed regalia for a victory parade which was to be led by Thawee.[44] While the parade succeeded in countering rumours about the strength of the resistance and its connection with the new government, it was to elicit the first overt manifestations of postwar civil-military conflict. Armed with the newest of weapons, provided through their association with the O.S.S., the Free Thai soldiers provoked the wrathful jealousy of the ill-equipped regular Thai army, many of whom had already been publicly disgraced during their disorderly withdrawal from northern Thailand. Accusing the civilian administration of attempting to embarrass and discredit the efforts of the regular army, the military leaders argued that Pridi was seeking to establish a new centre of military power.[45]

Thus, as the portents of widespread civil unrest became increasingly obvious to diplomatic experts as well as to Thai government officials, the abilities of the civilian administration to effect consensus diminished. Although Seni respected the regent's prerogative in administering internal affairs, he clearly resented Pridi's interference in international negotiations. Efforts by Pridi to exert pressure on Seni to hasten the signing of an Anglo-Thai agreement produced active opposition to Pridi, as well as to Thawee and Direk, who were seen as his collaborators.[46]

Ironically it was the largesse of the regent himself which had allowed this opposition to come to fruition. By agreeing to issue a declaration of amnesty to many of the younger members of the old regime who had been imprisoned for alleged participation in royalist plots, Pridi had furnished Seni with a basis of support which the latter had hitherto lacked. With a view towards the country's first postwar general election which was sure to follow settlement of terms with the Allies, Seni's brother Kukrit Pramoj and his associate Soh Sethabutr founded the "Progressive Party." Soh, who had only recently been released following nearly a decade in prison, and his co-founder, the younger Pramoj, were thus able to avail themselves of the liberalizing initiatives of the Pridi dominated regime to establish a political opposition grounded firmly in the traditionalist mould.[47]

Constitutional Government and the Legacy of the Allied Negotiations

As one expert on Thai affairs has noted, in the liquidation of World War II settlement of the issue of Thailand's belligerent status was to have the effect of "clearing the political decks for action."[48] The support of American diplomats for their reticent Siamese counterparts, at the negotiating table in Kandy, proved to be a factor in hastening Thailand's return to constitutional government. In Thailand the disparate membership of the Free Thai, for years united in their repudiation of Japanese influence and military government, was to find itself divided on many aspects of the postwar governance of the country. Efforts to liberalize civil rights, many of which antedated the signing of formal peace treaties with the Allies, had sanctioned an effective opposition to the government before the actual promulgation of a national constitution.[49] Moreover, a similarly extra-constitutional ruling by the country's Dika court (Siam's traditional judicial body) stating that the punishment of those acknowledged to be war criminals was unconstitutional, exceeded the court's true power[50] and consequently augmented the factionalism which characterized the political scene during Thailand's civilian interregnum. The negotiations, which had already demonstrated fundamental differences in Anglo-American perceptions of Thai culpability, had also been a source of divisiveness within the ranks of the country's civilian leadership. Clashes between Pridi Panomyong and Seni Pramoj focussed on the issue of which terms and conditions would prove most propitious to the achievement of stable and sovereign governance in Thailand. For Pridi, negotiations with the United States and Britain represented Thailand's return to the international community of nations as an equal and respected partner, thus he saw no real utility in playing off one power against the other through a protracted settlement process which would in turn delay the implementation of constitutional government. In contrast, Seni understood exceedingly well the mandate that had passed to the United States as a result of the events of the preceding five years. Well aware of the ascendance of the American position, particularly in international economic affairs, Seni advocated a negotiation strategy that would force the British to relinquish control over Thailand's trade.

Ironically, by December of 1945, lagging American support for Thai negotiators suggested to both U.S. and Thai diplomats a weakening of what had been an apparent U.S. resolve to stem the tide of resurgent imperialism. The American representative in Bangkok decried the fact that the lack of active U.S. backing for Nationalist movements in Indochina and the Netherlands East Indies had produced a marked change in attitude in American-Thai relations. Noting that "disillusionment was great amongst Thai nationals," charg*é d'affaires* Yost made the pungent observation that a "view now finds increasing credence that the United States hardly interests itself in Southeast Asia except for limited commercial purposes and intends to leave the region wholly to the disposition of the French, British and Dutch."[51] Yost's recommendation that "American abstention" would not "contribute to longterm stability in Southeast Asia" elicited a decisive and immediate response from the State Department.[52] Instructing Yost to advise Thai leaders against signing a treaty with Britain until the conclusion of Anglo-American discussions on an "appropriate settlement," Secretary Acheson stated of his British counterparts:

> . . . quite frankly, if they cannot meet our views, we are promptly going to resume diplomatic relations with Siam, and of course when diplomatic relations are resumed, we will feel free to comment to the Siamese as we have commented to the British on the terms of the proposed agreement.[53]

The subsequent softening of British attitudes towards the Thai represented a triumph of American diplomacy. Initial evidence of this modification in Britain's demands came with British agreement to allow the amount of the rice levy imposed on Thailand to be established under the aegis of a combined Anglo-American commission.[54] Thus while American intervention seemed to bode well for the cause of Thai sovereignty, the real effect of this display of American diplomatic influence was somewhat more complex. Prompted by American demands and finally coerced by the threat that essential loans for Britain's postwar reconstruction would be denied congressional approval, the British acceded to modified demands in their treaty with Thailand.[55] The Anglo-Thai agreement of January 1st, 1946 was the first postwar treaty ending a state of war with an Axis nation. During the course of treaty negotiations, U.S. refusals to support British proposals to reduce the size and prestige of the Thai armed forces were motivated by what could be described as an American assumption that Thailand's unique history of independence would "automatically promote a strong sense of individual freedom and the desire to establish the corresponding institutions of government."[56] Thai liberals who had come to power not by virtue of their countrymen's respect for constitutional governance but because of the imminent defeat of the Japanese, were eager to corroborate this assumption largely because they feared what imposition of a unilateral settlement with the British would mean. Significantly, the provision of the settlement would still impose an indemnity upon the Thai under which the price of rice inside the country would be regulated to an artifically low level.

In Thailand the conclusion of a peace agreement with Britain was seen as the removal of the last barrier to renewed constitutional governance. With the promulgation of the constitution came the promise that a general election would be held on January 12, 1946. The return of the young king, Ananda, from Switzerland and his approval of Pridi's plans also augured well for the establishment of some degree of democratic government. The presence of the youthful monarch saw the dissolution of Pridi's regency and his installation as senior stateman. An unbridled optimism which concealed imminent frictions within the government was characterized by the comments of one Thai observer who noted that:

> There seems little reason to doubt that full-fledged democracy will be attained in Siam. The King, brought up by democratic parents, is a genuine supporter of democracy and will defend it. Luang Pradit, the ex-regent, recognized as Siam's flaming liberal and an unswerving son of democracy has blazed the trail for it.[57]

Certainly Ananda's approval of Pridi's constitutional initiatives promised to be an important source of political legitimization. Since the vast majority of the Thai populace had never really acknowledged the change in the status of the monarch which followed the 1932 coup d'etat, Ananda's support for Pridi afforded the senior statesman a decided psychological advantage over his rivals. To a large extent this advantage was demonstrated by the results of Thailand's first postwar elections which gave an overwhelming majority to former Free Thai candidates who were Pridi supporters. Under the provisions of the new constitution six political parties would contest future elections: the Progressive Party led by Kukrit Pramoj, which supported Khuang; the Unionist and Democratic Front parties which supported Pridi; the Democrat Party founded by Khuang which later incorporated Kukrit's Progressives, as well as the provincially-based Prachachon and Labor parties which were at least nominally Pridi supporters.[58] Despite the amount of popular support garnered by those parties associated with Pridi, certain aspects of the election results foreshadowed the basic instability of the government. Although the Progressive Party, dominated largely by former royalist supporters of the country's Śakdina class, did not pose a threat to Pridi's Unionist Democratic Front coalition in terms of popular support, they did succeed in winning several seats in the Bangkok-Thonburi area.[59] In this sense, support for the Progressive Party in the country's primal city suggested its appeal to a relatively affluent constituency which feared the reintroduction of Pridi's avowedly socialist economic doctrines. More important, the political sophistication and influence of this constituency constituted a decidedly powerful if numerically small opposition to Pridi's coalition.

A second aspect of the election results which proved to be Pridi's first actual setback came with the selection of Prime Minister, a post from which Seni Pramoj had resigned following the conclusion of Thailand's settlement with Britain. Pridi's nominee, Direk Jayanama was a confidant of the former regent as well as being a personality whose political views aligned closely with those of Pridi. Through Direk, Pridi would be able to exert more direct influence on cabinet decisions. Khuang's collusion with Kukrit's Progressive Party and a simultaneous split in the strong Isan section of parliament, however, served to sway the assembly to give Khuang the post of Prime Minister. (Members from the Isan, Thailand's Northeast, were a traditionally recalcitrant voting block.) The Isan members of parliament, who had been considered Pridi supporters, had become involved in jockeying for ministerial positions with a resulting division between those led by Liang Chaiyakan, who went over to Khuang's side as a cabinet minister, and Thongin Phuriphat who sided with Pridi largely on the basis of the latter's support for the rural co-operative movement.[60]

Predictably Khuang's government was plagued by factional infighting. Unlike Direk, Khuang was a strong and independent person whose popularity had come to rival that of Pridi. He was also a prominent landowner who, during the Japanese presence in Thailand had gained control of numerous Bangkok rice mills. Furthermore Khuang's broadened base of support now included many members of Kukrit's Progressive Party who, like Khuang, were prominent in Bangkok society as landowners and businessmen. The most notable of Khuang's cabinet appointments, that of Seni Pramoj to the post of Foreign Minister, underscored the growing association of Khuang's Democrat Party with the Pramoj brothers.[61] Throughout the early part of 1946, the representatives of Khuang and Pridi remained at odds on most issues. Khuang's resignation, under protests of Pridi's alleged attempts to manipulate the Assembly, came at the time of his government's defeat on the issue of enforcing government controls on commodities prices. The administration of Thailand's agreement to supply its surplus of rice to the aid of Britain's war-ravaged colonies had to that point been impeded by a variety of factors. Production capacity had fallen sharply.[62] Speculators had already commenced a brisk black market-trade in rice in Southern Thailand. Moreover Allied bombings of Thailand's railway network had seriously hampered capacity to transport existing stocks.[63] Thus Pridi's introduction of price regulation was an attempt to abide by the provisions of the Anglo-Thai treaty which had designated that the Thai provide a maximum of 1.5 million tons of rice by a date not later than September, 1947. In April of 1946 less than ten percent of this obligation had been fulfilled.[64]

Thongin Phuriphat's Sahaceep rural co-operative party had provided the margin of victory by which Pridi's interventionist measures gained support in the Assembly.[65] However Khuang maintained that such policies were impracticable and could only lead to the corruption of government officials who would be charged with the enforcement of the proposed regulations. Khuang also protested the fact that Pridi's Free Thai resistance, in contradiction of its postwar assurances, had become essentially a political movement. At this point the political strategy of the anti-Pridi faction appears to have crystallized. Unexpectedly, the leadership of this group sponsored an initiative to draft Pridi himself for the position of Prime Minister. In his political memoirs, Thawee Bunyaketu explains the concealed method in this apparent madness:

> . . . they calculated that the best way to kill Pridi's reputation was to make him the Prime Minister and expose him to public criticisms. Hence they took the initiative in formulating a petition from the Members of Parliament, including the unsuspecting followers of Pridi, that requested Pridi to become the Prime Minister.[66]

During a hiatus of some three weeks, Pridi had evidently weighed his decision to assume the position of first minister, and the Khuang-Seni faction was successful in effecting an even more consequential, albeit unplanned, alteration of the Thai political stage. Seni, who had overseen the legislation of a War Crimes Act, through which the prosecution of Phibul and his collaborators was to take place, allowed the Dika court to employ a "legal loophole" that declared the legislation unconstitutional.[67] In fact neither the constitution of the courts nor the Parliament's Judicial Committee for the Constitution had ever maintained any provisions prohibiting ex post facto application of the law. Thus, as Frank Darling has noted "the release of Phibul and his wartime aides" was obtained through an "unconstitutional usurpation of powers by the high court."[68] The subsequent freeing of Phibul sanctioned the wartime actions of his regime and, more important, obviated any sense of moral opposition to military obstruction of the constitutional process.

Conflict and Degeneration in the Civilian Administration

Pridi's acceptance of the Prime Ministerial post in late March of 1946 played into the trap set by his wily opponents. Although he enjoyed popular support in the Assembly much of his popularity stemmed from his role as Regent and Senior Statesman of Thailand--positions in which he was not compelled to "soil" himself in the often sordid arena of political debate. As Prime Minister, he would assume direct responsibility and culpability for the economic and political debacle which the process of postwar settlements had wrought upon the Thai nation. While Thailand had concluded treaties which normalized relations with the United States and Britain, it still faced imminent and arduous negotiations with France regarding the future administration of the Mekong provinces, Siem Riep and Battembang. Due to the traditional nature of Thai claims to this region, and the fact that the latter province was the home of Khuang Aphaiwong, the settlement process promised to be a difficult one. Devising political strategy from an presumed position of strength, Pridi instituted a bicameral legislative structure that, under the provisions of the new constitution, would see the lower house, in which he maintained a solid majority, elect a similarly Pridi-dominated Senate. Thus in spite of virulent criticism from the now solidly forged Khuang-Seni coalition, Pridi seemed to have effected a means of preserving his party's political influence while carrying out legislative modifications aimed at institutional reform of the government. The new constitution was noteworthy in that it barred military officers from active participation in politics.[69] In a like manner, other provisions stipulated that members of the government bureaucracy could not hold positions in either the National Assembly or the Senate.[70] Yet while Pridi improved his base of support, mounting dissension on the broad issues of the economy and retrocession of territories acquired by the Phibul regime threatened what had once seemed to be an unassailable popularity.

As early as December of 1945 American diplomatic sources had made clear that Thai accession to French claims in Cambodia "would cause grave political repercussions in Siam" that would "seriously injure Siam's prestige with other peoples of Southeast Asia".[71] In advising their Thai clients on appropriate diplomatic strategy, American political experts intoned that any hasty accommodation of France's demands would not be in Thailand's best interests[72] yet remarked in subsequent communiques to Washington that:

> . . . Pridi inclines to a conciliatory settlement of [the] Indochina issue but is confronted by public attitude which most of political leaders share which is more united, inflamed and intransigent on Indochina frontier than on any other issue in Siamese domestic or foreign politics.[73]

Clearly, as he had been during the process of negotiating settlements with Britain, Pridi was motivated by a desire to expedite proceedings which, if complicated by the vagaries of international politics, could undermine his efforts to establish democratic government. Bearing in mind the complications which had attended negotiations with Britain, his attitude indeed seemed to be founded upon an understanding of these vagaries and their potentially harmful effects on his administration. Neither the British nor the Americans, despite the counsel of the latter would recognize Thailand's acquisition of the disputed territories.[74] Moreover, following incidents of armed aggression by the French on the disputed frontier, both British and American representatives advised Pridi to return the contested areas promptly.[75] Given this degree of inconsistency in U.S. attitudes, which had seen Pridi's personal appeals for U.S. support for a compromised settlement rejected, at the highest level of government,[76] Pridi's original desire to accede graciously to French claims seemed prudent. Yet, in attempting to gain American support for a compromise settlement which would allow the Thai to retain access to rice harvests in the disputed region, as well as an option to purchase part of the territory adjacent to Laos, Pridi sought a solution which would mollify his political opponents while augmenting Thailand's capacity to fulfil its indemnity.[77] The urgency of the Thai leader's quandary was amply conveyed in Charles Yost's report to the U.S. Secretary of State:

> . . . the Prime Minister feels that any Siamese government which makes an apparently voluntary retrocession of territories without compensation is committing political suicide. Nationalist sentiment will rise to a boiling point and military wing of coup d'état clique, whose support constitutes essential element in present governments Assembly majority may well swing back to the opposition and place Khuang in power on platform of intransigence vis-à-vis France.[78]

Days later Yost noted that the Thai government "might have to resist by force" the public displeasure elicited by the Indochina border issue--and attributed the destabilizing effect of the crisis to the Bangkok press forecasts of an imminent French offensive.[79] Significantly, Pridi's final plea for U.S. support, a personal appeal to President Harry Truman, came less than a week before the incident which would prove to be his bête noire; the untimely death of the young King Ananda.

Undoubtedly the incident of Ananda Mahidol's death was to be of great consequence to a government in the process of establishing constitutional democracy. More important, the circumstances of the death, clouded in mystery, tended to exacerbate the suspicion and distrust which had come to characterize relations between the leaders of the country's civilian administration. On the morning of June 9, two days before he was to leave to complete his studies in Europe, the young monarch was found dead in his quarters in the north west wing of Barompiman Hall section of the Royal Palace. A description of his condition is provided by Rayne Kruger in a study of the King's death entitled The Devil's Discus:

> Ananda lay in bed as if asleep. His flowered coverlet was drawn up. He lay on his back, his legs stretched out together. His arms extended fairly close to his sides, were outside the coverlet. On his left wrist was his watch, on a finger of his left hand his ring, and an inch or two from his left hand a pistol, the American Army.45.[80]

Initial and remarkably cursory investigations of the cause of death concluded that Ananda had committed suicide.[81] This assertion was challenged, however, by subsequent and more detailed investigations, One well-known Chulalongkorn hospital surgeon stated flatly that the King had been murdered.[82] The testimony of the palace staff and Ananda's younger brother Bhoomiphol established nothing and only added to the already ample scope for speculation as to the reason behind the death. In the days which followed it became evident that efforts were being made to conceal the truth. Among the membership of Khuang's Democrat party suggestions were made as to Pridi's complicity in the national tragedy. While Pridi himself offered no explanation, his denial of involvement in the incident could not placate the immediate and sudden surge of anti-Pridi sentiment which was encouraged by the Democrat party. Certainly, had Pridi wished, as his opponents simplistically suggested, to establish a republic by the elimination of the King, he would not have offered the throne to Bhoomipol only hours after Ananda's death.[83] Moreover Pridi, more than any other politician, had benefited from his close association with the Thai royal family in his position as Regent.

Ironically, it was the public's recognition of Pridi's traditional responsibility as guardian of the royal family that invoked continued assertions of his culpability. Indeed, it had been upon Pridi's suggestion that the return of the monarch to Thailand might augur well for rapprochement with Britain that Ananda had, reluctantly, returned from his studies in Europe.[84] Thus, while the traditional intensity of devotion to the monarchy was expressed in a truly national sense of grief, the reciprocal emotion of anger engendered by the loss of the young king was harnessed against Pridi's authority. Sensitive to the diminution of his standing and its probable effect on the status of his party's majority, Pridi tendered his resignation ostensibly "on the advice of his doctor" in mid-August of 1946. Although a hastily assembled Regency council had confirmed his position as head of state, Pridi's move was probably calculated to offset the wave of animosity towards his party triggered by Ananda's death. Clearly, Pridi envisaged his role as extra-parliamentary overseer and elder statesman as still tenable and of great importance in the consolidation of Thailand's position in the postwar international order. Yet Pridi's avowed goal of a liberalized constitutional governance had been seriously undermined by his own reaction to the national crisis. In response to published and private accusations of his complicity in the monarch's death, Pridi lashed out against his critics. His declaration of sweeping governmental powers of arrest and censorship culminated in the imprisonment of a number of newspaper editors as well as two opposition members who were charged with libel.[85] While these actions in themselves might have been justified by a conclusive investigation of the king's death, the indecisive statements issued by the Pridi-appointed committee only lent credence to the assertions of his detractors.

In retrospect Pridi's resignation can be seen as the culmination of the Khuang-Seni scheme to discredit his leadership. Had he maintained his preeminent position as Senior Statesman, and thereby avoided direct involvement in the increasingly virulent polemics of the National Assembly as well as responsibility for carrying out investigation of Ananda's death, Pridi could have retained greater influence over the constitutional modifications he had hoped for. Although Pridi's faction would continue to prevail in the National Assembly, the king's death had made credible persistent rumours of Pridi's anti-royalist convictions and his alleged desire to found a Siamese republic. To some degree civilian governance and the pursuit of an enduring constitutional system had been jeopardized by Pridi's inability to delegate authority in the process of postwar settlement. Yet many of the forces which had coalesced to undermine his goals resulted from the indecision and outright duplicity which characterized the Allied negotiations following their victory over the Japanese. Thus, beset by the legacy of economic instability and budding domestic rivalries, as well as a dubious international status, Thailand's civilian government could hardly have anticipated greater adversity. However, the effect of the postwar settlements imposed on Thailand were yet to come to full fruition. While Pridi and the Khuang-Seni coalition stood at loggerheads, the third actor of 1932's revolutionary drama waited to take the stage once more.

CHAPTER FIVE: SHADOWS OF THE COLD WAR: MILITARY INTERVENTION AND THE DEMISE OF CIVILIAN GOVERNANCE

Despite the death of Ananda and the economic disorder which plagued postwar Thailand, the Pridi government had achieved success in normalizing Thai relations with most nations while strengthening the country's international status. Indeed, Pridi's concern with the stabilization of Thailand's international relations had resulted in his efforts to expedite negotiations with the great powers inspite of fervent opposition from the Khuang-Seni coalition. Throughout 1945-46, negotiations with the United Kingdom regarding the Shan states and territories in Malaya occupied by Phibul's army were carried out and concluded with Thailand relinquishing all claims to territory taken since December 1941. Relations with France and negotiations on the even more contentious issue of the Mekong territories were similarly settled with the return of the disputed provinces to French tutelage in November of 1946. For Pridi, the re-establishment of Thailand's international status also implied many new considerations. Whereas in the pre-war era, Thailand's diplomatic initiatives were directed almost exclusively towards conciliation and appeasement of the colonial powers, the emergence of indigenous nationalist movements in the nations of the region suggested to Pridi the need for closer relations with these groups in the postwar era. To a large degree Pridi's desire to reach speedy and amicable settlements with the Allies, even at the price of domestic harmony, seemed motivated by a conviction that Thailand's acceptance for membership in the United Nations would in turn enhance the cause of democratic governance. Undoubtedly Thailand's efforts to avoid the worst consequences of its former belligerent status were contingent upon a smooth conclusion of negotiations with Britain and France and the favourable intercession of the United States. If Pridi's regime could prove capable of guiding the country on its "passage back" it was reasonable to assume increased popular support. Moreover, it is clear that Pridi's vision of his country's postwar status included a leading role for Thailand among Southeast Asia's emerging nation states. Thus, for Thailand's Senior Statesman, the settlement of negotiations with the Allies represented the means through which the nation's long-threatened sovereignty could be not only guaranteed, but fully exercised in a substantially altered international setting.

Thailand's final acceptance into the United Nations depended upon the collective approval of the postwar "Big Five." For this reason, normalization of diplomatic relations with China and the Soviet Union was essential. Although territorial issues played no part in these settlements, approbation of the Chinese and Soviets was contingent upon the repeal of what these nations' respective delegates had viewed as Phibul's more strident policies. Thailand's anti-communist legislation which dated from 1933 was abolished.[1] Laws enacted by the former military regime which had excluded Thailand's sizable Chinese minority from many occupations as well as severely limited the number of immigrants from China were similarly repealed.[2] For Pridi these initiatives, while essential to Thailand's reinstatement in the community of nations, were approached not without some trepidation. Almost as if to disavow any political association with Moscow, Pridi stated that:

> . . . politics and diplomacy are two entirely different things. Whether we agree with another's beliefs has nothing to do with diplomatic relations. I wish to insist that Siam can never be a communist country because our customs, conventions and history differ greatly from that [sic] of Russia. . . . I have studied enough economics to be in a position to say that Communism can never happen in this country and that we have nothing to fear about that.[3]

With respect to relations with the Chinese, Pridi's position was perhaps less unequivocal. The first official treaty between Siam and China had seen the establishment of a Chinese Embassy in Bangkok with its Ambassador, Dr. Li, assuming a leading role in the negotiations through which Thailand was supplying the Nationalist government with direly needed stocks of rice.[4] Pridi also aided the institution of Thailand's first labour federation, which was composed largely of Chinese immigrants. The Central Labour Union, initially formed under Thai leadership but dominated by the country's small class of skilled Chinese workers,[5] was seen as a means of mollifying China's misgivings about the treatment of its nationals while quelling friction between indigenous Chinese and their wartime tormentors. Phibul's anti-Chinese policies had resulted in riots throughout central Bangkok following the Japanese defeat and had left a legacy of mistrust which Pridi was for many reasons anxious to allay. The reintegration of Thailand's Chinese workers into the country's postwar economy was important as this group formed the bulk of the mine workers, rubber planters and teak foresters essential to rejuvenation of a battered economy.[6]

Thailand's re-entry to the arena of sovereign nations thus demanded compromise on both domestic and international issues. While Pridi well understood the need to maintain U.S. support in negotiations with Britain and France, he had become aware of the limits of that support. Although cession of territory to the colonial powers had been a divisive issue, it had guaranteed Siam's future as a fully sovereign member of a heralded international assembly of nations obviously held in esteem by Pridi and most of the civilian faction. Similarly the establishment of relations with China and the Soviet Union, while jeopardizing the popular support of Pridi's Constitutional Front, was essential to full diplomatic recognition of the Thai regime as well as to the restoration of peaceful co-existence of the Thai populace with the country's prominent Chinese minority.

Unfortunately, Pridi's absorption with the international relations of Thailand undermined his capacity to balance the civilian coalition in his favour. Following upon the death of Ananda, Pridi installed Thamrong Nawasawat, one of the original coup promoters, as Premier. While Thamrong was well known amongst Pridi's Constitutional-Sahaceep party coalition, he enjoyed little popular support outside the assembly.[7] Shortly after Thamrong's appointment, Pridi demonstrated his pre-occupation with foreign affairs by embarking upon a "good will" tour to the "Big Five" nations of the newly inaugurated United Nations Security Council. During this tour

Pridi was acknowledged as a purveyor of progress and democracy. His role in the defeat of Japan and in the reorientation of Siamese statecraft towards democracy was widely praised.[8] Before Christmas 1946 Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander for Southeast Asia, proclaimed at a London dinner in Pridi's honour that:

> . . . there are many who were prisoners of war in Siam who have good reason to be grateful for Pridi's good will to us. So let us honour a man who has rendered high service to the allied cause and to his own country, and who from my personal knowledge of him is a firm advocate of Anglo-Siamese friendship. The chain of local resistance to Japanese oppression in the occupied lands of Southeast Asia had very few gaps in it and one of the strongest links was forged by Pridi in Siam.[9]

Even though Pridi enjoyed favourable recognition for his achievements in the field of foreign relations, the conditions under which his coalition assumed power were predisposed to affect his downfall. Ananda's death continued to loom like a dark cloud over his leadership. While the events surrounding the death remained a mystery, Pridi's indecisive and ostensibly contrite attitude gave his opponents sufficient license to attack his government and leadership on a variety of issues related to conditions wrought by the postwar settlements. Of primary concern to many of the civilian leaders were relations between elements of Phibul's armed forces and the members of Pridi's Free Thai resistance. As has been mentioned, initial hostility between the resistance members and the abased ranks of the Thai armed forces resulted from the former group's proud display of modern American weaponry and their alleged ridicule of Phibul's defeated army. Subsequent developments associated with the settlement of terms with the Allies augmented this animosity by subjecting the disparaged military to further abuses. Following the war the bulk of Phibul's fighting forces, which had been engaged in the mountainous jungle terrain of the Shan states, some five hundred kilometers north of Bangkok, were to be assembled in Bangkok for the purpose of demobilization. This plan was however ill-fated as it was enacted simultaneously with an Allied directive that all rolling stock be reserved for the speedy delivery of Thailand's rice indemnity. Military requests for troop transport were acrimoniously refused by national railway officials and incredibly the already decimated armed forces personnel were given orders to return to the capital on foot. The consequent movement of a disorganized and discredited military force over more than half the length of the country wrought havoc upon the rural populace and the morale of the army. Thawee Bunyaketu has described the chaotic events of this exodus in his memoirs:

> . . . instead of referring the problem of transporting soldiers to the Government, they (the military command) ordered the soldiers to walk to Bangkok. Many of them marched 300 to 500 kilometers. They carried all of their weapons with them and ravaged the countryside, terrorizing and looting the people.[10]

As Thawee goes on to note, the military command was quick to use this "forced march" as a means of influencing the youthful rank and file of the armed forces against the civilian government.[11] Thawee's interpretation of these events is corroborated by Thak Chaloemtiarana who observes that although "the ministry of defense deplored the lawless acts of its troops, a majority of officers felt concern for the well-being of their men and resented the actions of the civilian government which they saw as responsible for the degeneration of the army."[12] The decimated yet once proud Kongthap Phayap or Northern Army which had in fact succeeded in sustaining control of what was briefly known as the United Thai States, was reduced to the level of Sua, or bandits. As if to add insult to injury subsequent Allied instructions were given to provide immediate rail transport from the northern region for Japanese troops while the morale of Phibul's army lapsed into malevolence. Jira Songkhramm, former commander of Phibul's Northern Army recounts the plight of his troops at the war's end:

> . . . the whole army withdrew in sad disorder. People looked upon the Thai soldiers as if they were Japanese prisoners of war. . . . Many attacked the army both directly and indirectly. The common soldiers wore tattered uniforms which could not be replaced since there were none to replace them. Military codes of conduct were loosened because army units remained in name only, the troops were worn out and tired in body and soul. People believed there was no use in having an army anymore.[13]

Further alienation of the military came with the forced retirement of many army officers following the war. Pridi's new constitution prohibited military officers from active participation in politics, stipulating that anyone holding a government position could not simultaneously hold a seat in either the Senate or the National Assembly. Aware of the threat to civilian governance posed by such widespread disaffection in the ranks of the military, Pridi undertook to reorganize its leadership. However, in delegating this task to two members of the Free Thai Movement's military cadre, Pridi only fueled the already considerable animosity between former resistance leaders and the regular armed forces. Luang Sinat and Luang Adul, both prominent members of the Free Thai, were resented by the military for what was seen as their attempts to undermine the influence of Phibul's former commanders in the army rank and file. Proud of their achievements throughout a period during which the Thai military had expanded by some three times its prewar level,[14] the more politically astute members of the army's youthful officer corps came to realize, as Walter Vella has noted, that they held the potential "to control government without allying themselves with the civilian leaders or adhering to the spirit of constitutionalism espoused by the current regime."[15] Most important, few of these officers were old enough to have been among the original 1932 coup group.

Meanwhile, Pridi's attempts to strengthen the base of support for the Thamrong government floundered. Government sponsored outlets for the sale of essential commodities at subsidized prices were plagued by corrupt administration. Illicit trade by government officials in rice and other basic commodities proliferated due largely to the staggering contrast between prices established under the Allies regulatory agency and those available through the black market. Under the existing regulations of the allied-sponsored rice commission one bulk ton of rice, much of which was destined for China or the beleaguered colonies of the British Empire, commanded a price equivalent to slightly more than £12 sterling. The same amount of rice sold in the now lucrative underground market outside Thailand would realize nearly a ten fold profit of £120.[16] The profitability of this illegal marketing of rice was augmented by the inflation of the baht. Thus it has been estimated that during the two years following the war, fully half of all of Thailand's exports of rice left the country via the black market.[17] The resulting accumulation of extra-legal capital did not accrue to Thailand's numerous rice producers, who, especially in the country's northeastern sector, were hard hit by the inflation. Rather it was Thailand's small but influential urbanized class of merchants and bureaucrats who enjoyed the black-market windfall. In this sense Phibul's wartime policy of encouraging government functionaries to take control of public enterprise can be seen to have influenced the bureaucracy to act in its own best interests against the purposes of the Pridi-Thamrong administration. Moreover, the Sakdina, Siam's small but influential landowning class now represented by the Khuang-Seni coalition welcomed the difficulties encountered by the current regime because Khuang's government had fallen on the issue of its opposition to Pridi's policy of price regulation.[18]

Yet while the weakening of Pridi's regime can be attributed to circumstances external to his prerogatives as chief executive, Pridi's reactions to these circumstances further debilitated the strength of his regime. By abdicating his post as Prime Minister in favour of the influential but decidely subordinate Thamrong Nawasawat, Pridi obviated the effect of his ideological sway as the voice of the Constitutional Front-Sahaceep Coalition. Although this coalition retained a sizable majority in both houses of the Assembly, following Pridi's resignation party discipline and cohesion steadily declined. The rural co-operative movement, the ideological linchpin linking the Constitutional Front with the farm oriented Sahaceep faction, had not, as O.S.S. observers noted, developed as a basis of popular support for the government.[19] Furthermore, attempts by Pridi to channel American equipment to farmers already pressed by inflation and severely limited transport facilities proved a fiasco. Aluminum barges purchased at a high cost from the United States and purportedly designed for the transportation of bulk commodities in shallow water were insufficiently buoyant and thus useless.[20] By mid-1946 the trade in countraband rice had reached such a magnitude that Thailand's southernmost provinces, those adjacent to the lucrative markets of Malaya, experienced acute rice shortages.[21] Similar, though less severe shortages were felt a few months later in Bangkok. In the north and northeastern provinces where the inadequacy of transportation was greatest, farmers were often unable to gain access to markets and consequently were deprived of currency sufficient even for the purchase of necessities.

The recovery of Thailand's economy was also restricted by controls enacted under Anglo-American agreements which regulated the export of other important commodities. Protracted negotiations for compensation to foreign companies involved in the tin and teak industries limited the resumption of production for export to twenty-five and thiry percent of to 1940 levels.[22] In late December of 1946, a joint Anglo-American agreement was signed through which depleted Thai stocks of tin would be purchased by the U .S. and Britain on a fifty-fifty basis. However, as was the case with rice, externally regulated prices only induced a thriving black market trade which drew upon estimated stocks of nearly 17,000 tons hoarded during the Japanese occupation.[23] Again, the legacy of involvement by Phibul's military administration in state enterprise, which followed the expulsion of foreign business interests from the country, emerges as a salient factor. During the war years bureaucratic corruption and self aggrandizement were justified as a measures against Japan's economic drain on the nation. Consequently for Pridi's postwar regime, which was hard pressed to gain the co-operation of a bureaucracy now accustomed to profitable involvement in the administration of industry, attempts to regulate the economy became futile. The enactment of legislation against profiteering in basic commodities only heightened the popular conviction that even more serious shortages were imminent.

As much as anything however, Pridi's choice of Thamrong as Prime Minister proved imprudent and clearly underscored the folly in Pridi's preoccupation with the management of the country's foreign relations. Thamrong, who as has been mentioned possessed no legitimizing base of popular support, was perhaps seen by Pridi as a successor who was easily manipulated. Moreover, due to his background as a naval officer, Thamrong could also provide the Pridi faction with a valuable counterbalance to the resurgence of Phibul's army.[24] Yet in view of the relative weakness of the navy, which numbered less than a third of the total armed forces,[25] Pridi's reliance upon naval support as the equalizer in the eventuality of a show down with the army was undoubtedly an underestimation of the army's capacity to initiate a violent change of government. Because Thamrong assumed the position of Prime Minister at a time when Thailand had achieved normalized relations with the Allied powers, his government, with a sizable majority in both houses appeared firmly ensconced in power. However, during Pridi's diplomatic sojourns abroad, Thamrong's regime faced increasingly acute difficulties in dealing with domestic and international issues.

Of major concern was the problem of rice smuggling. Although Thailand had succeeded in negotiating a reduction in the original terms of its proposed rice indemnity to a level of 1.2 million tons, and subsequently to half of that amount, the country was finding it hard to fulfil even this obligation. While these reductions in the total indemnity included a corresponding adjustment in price to the level of £20 per ton, this amount represented only five percent of the potential black market value. Legislative regulations enacted by Thamrong's government, allowing the government to inspect all existing stocks of rice and to secure on demand quotas of bulk rice from those stocks, were nonetheless opposed by the Khuang-Seni Democrat coalition. Despite the fact that existing agreements with the Allies prohibited the Thai government from selling conscripted rice on the world market, it was clear that diminishing revenues, which hindered the regime's efforts to placate its inflation-ravaged bureaucracy,[26] might be replenished through government sales of rice at controlled prices. In this way, the Thamrong regime would recoup lost revenues which in turn could be applied towards increased remuneration for the nation's growingly restive and politically significant bureaucracy. In response to opposition to his policies from the Khuang-Pramoj coalition, Thamrong candidly clarified the delicate balance between effective governance and social welfare his regime sought to strike:

> . . . our greatest advantage is the advantage to the state in acquiring money. We have gone to certain measures even to force rice from farmers without compensation. Frankly, whatever the people have blamed me for doing . . . I concede that they are true, but I did it to save the country from destruction. . . . I guarantee with my own neck that no one will die of hunger, but also that we (the government) will receive money.[27]

Yet another means by which Thamrong's government planned to supplement its depleted revenues was by substantially curtailing military expenditures.[28] However, by this time the nucleus of what was later known as the "eighth of November group" had been formed. Encouraged by the reluctance of the national judiciary to prosecute charges against Phibul and other military leaders, this youthful officer clique held none of the traditional allegiances or exposure to western political ideology which bound members of the original 1932 coup group. Furthermore, because of the reliance of the Pridi-Thamrong government on the leadership of its "parachuted" military administrators, Luang Sinat and Adul Aduldejarat, the civilian regime underestimated the ability of the "retired" officer corps to gain the support of officers who still commanded troops. A foreshadowing of future events came with Phibul's decision in March of

1947 to return to active participation in national politics. Prompted by his personal astrologer Chalaem, who foresaw a propitious cosmological configuration,[29] Phibul announced his espousal of "democratic" principles under the Tharmathipat ("Right is Might") Party. Predictably, Phibul joined with the Khuang-Pramoj coalition in criticizing the policies of the Thamrong government. Attacks against the Pridi-Thamrong coalition had increased markedly following the Dika court's decision not to carry out proceedings against Phibul. The Bangkok daily Varasap was a most strident critic of the government and despite its strongly anti-fascist tradition had been an outspoken defender of the Phibul clique. Significantly U.S. intelligence reports attributed this journalistic volte face to military involvement in the financing of Varasap.[30]

Almost simultaneous with Phibul's re-entry into the political arena, other significant developments occurred with respect to the future of Thailand. Direk Jayanama, considered to be the country's most experienced politician in the field of foreign relations, tendered his resignation. Denying allegations that his decision had resulted from frictions within the Thamrong cabinet, Direk only acknowledged that:

> . . . the Prime Minister should be sympathized with. In my personal opinion the principles espoused by the present government are good, but there are shortcomings in practice which should be reformed.[31]

In taking over Direk's suddenly vacant portfolio the beleaguered Thamrong could not but note the foreign policy initiatives being undertaken by his opponents. Khuang and his erstwhile supporter Prince Varn had embarked upon a diplomatic mission to Washington in an effort to garner U.S. support in the final settlement of the Indochinese border issue which was currently under consideration by the United Nations. While American policy on this issue had favoured such a negotiated settlement, the fundamental direction of U.S. foreign relations had undergone a subtle yet significant change. The unity of the "Big Five" had proven chimerical. By late 1946 modifications in the political perspective of American decision-makers made it necessary for the United States to enunciate a global policy of resistance to Communist expansion. Throughout that year the United States became increasingly uneasy about events in Indochina, particularly in view of deteriorating Washington-Moscow relations and the alarming spectre of a possible communist victory in China. Accordingly American diplomats were instructed even early in 1946 to ascertain in fact how "Communist" the Viet Minh nationalists were.[32] As tensions in the area grew, subsequent State Department directives prescribed careful monitoring of the relative strengths of communist and non-communist elements in Indochina and their contacts with communists in other countries.[33] Upon receiving affirmation through the Paris embassy that the Indochinese nationalists maintained "direct contact with Moscow" and were "receiving advice and instructions from the Soviets,"[34] Undersecretary-of-State Dean Acheson instructed his chief of Southeast Asian Affairs to be vigilant of the Indochinese nationalists as agents of "international communism." Moreover, Acheson made clear that in the view of the State Department the "least desirable eventuality would be the establishment of a communist dominated, Moscow-oriented" Indochinese state.[35]

Significantly, it was at this time that Edwin Stanton, the newly appointed American ambassador at Bangkok, relayed important new information on the aspirations of Southeast Asian nationalist groups currently centred in Thailand. Citing evidence provided by the Dutch ambassador to Moscow, Stanton outlined the probability of an anti-western and potentially leftist oriented federation of nations emerging in the region.[36] Indeed a proposal for such a Pan-Southeast Asian Union had been in the planning stages. The Pridi-Thamrong government had made no secret of its sympathy for the fledgling nationalist movements which had recently arisen in the area[37] and, as John Coast has noted, Pridi himself had suggested that the Union:

> . . . consist initially of a free Siam, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam presumably associated with France in a French Union. . . . and that if the scheme was a success, Burma, Malaya, the Philippines and Indonesia would be invited to join.[38]

In fact the initial planning for a federation of Southeast Asian nations had resulted from Franco-Siamese negotiations on the disputed Mekong territories. Upon the recommendation of a five nation international committee of conciliation, headed by the American diplomat William Phillips, France and Thailand had re-entered negotiations under the auspices of a proposed Consultative Committee for Economic and Cultural Relations of Southeast Asian Nations.[39] While agreeing to this ruling, the Thamrong regime had asked for economic concessions in the disputed territories which included some of the most prolific rice producing areas in the region.[40] Presumably with a view to ameliorating its tenuous economic position, the Thai government, aware that it would probably in the end relinquish territorial rights in Battambang and Siemreap, sought to realize some tangible economic gain from its lengthy negotiations with France. However, subsequent and strenuous opposition to the agreement from the Khuang-Seni coalition on the grounds that Thailand was showing "subservience" to France quashed the possibility of Thai participation in a French sponsored regional union. As a result of this strong domestic disapprobation the Thamrong government announced it would only consider co-sponsorship in the proposed union if France reciprocated by guaranteeing the independence of Laos and Cambodia.[41]

France's refusal to accede to this demand and her consequent reluctance to co-sponsor a Southeast Asian Union did not preclude further steps to organize such a union. Meetings between Pridi, Aung San of Burma, and Tieng Sirikhand, one of Thamrong's more influential ministers, had resulted in plans for a patently anti-western union of Southeast Asian states in which Thailand would assume a position of leadership. Against a background of escalating Viet Minh insurgency in neighbouring Indochina and the threat of similar action in Indonesia, representatives of the Thai government took the bold initiative of inviting exiled Vietnamese, Loatians and Cambodians, as well as representatives of every nation in southern Asia to participate in the proposed union.[42] Combined with the concessions made by the Pridi-Thamrong government in recognizing the Soviet Union, repealing anti-communist legislation and sanctioning increases in Chinese immigration, this latest foreign policy initiative was construed by the military as a threat to the cherished values of Nation, Religion and King.[43] These suspicions were not allayed by Thamrong's appointment of Pridi's old friend Luang Sanguan as ambassador to Moscow. As if to attempt to solidify further an independent course of Thai foreign policy in the hands of his regime, Thamrong went on to select Pridi's youthful half brother Arthakiddhi to replace Direk Jayanama as foreign minister with the more diplomatically astute Direk being named as Thailand's special representative in London.[44]

Meanwhile, throughout the summer of 1947, significant developments took place in the country's domestic affairs. The Khuang-Seni coalition, which had augmented its strength in the May 1947 elections, was weakened by the defection of Liang Chaiyakan, leader of the assembly's Isan faction, which had originally sided with Khuang following the 1946 elections.[45] Liang's entry into the Pridi-Thamrong camp underscored the appeal Pridi's international policies held for many of the political leaders from northeastern Thailand. Several of the Isan politicians who had been most vocal in their advocacy of Cambodian, Vietnamese and Loatian independence movements had thrown their support behind Thamrong's government. Both Tieng Sirikand, the soon to be named President of the Southeast Asian League as well as Thawin Udol, the organization's chief public relations officer were prominent Isan politicians.[46] Moreover, the

League's Vice-President, Tran Van Giao and General Secretary, Prince Suphanuwong, were prominent leaders in the Viet Minh and Pathet Lao respectively.[47]

American acceptance of the restoration of French sovereignty over Indochina had eclipsed an initial reluctance to be anything but neutral on the issue. State Department appraisals of the Viet Minh indicated not only that they were "communistically inclined" but that American co-operation with the French was now increasingly essential to stem the tide of a world-wide communist menace.[48] By early 1947, the Truman administration had proclaimed and adopted a policy of containment which clearly indicated that the U.S. perceived a Soviet threat not only to Europe but to the disintegrating colonial empires of Southeast Asia. For American policy planners, the heightened strategic significance of Thailand in the region necessitated efforts to secure the allegiance of that nation's dominant class of landowning and politically influential individuals. In the shaping of the post-war world, Thailand, as the rice bowl of Asia, would have to be quickly reintegrated into an economic system in which it could provide both a dependable source of raw materials for a resurgent Japanese industrial plant, as well as a freely accessible market for the goods that Japanese industry would produce.[49] In this sense, Phibul's wartime efforts to engender a military dominated form of state capitalism were significant in producing the beginnings of a powerful compradore class. The co-operation of this class of landowners and military entrepreneurs, despite the blemish of their Axis affiliations, was important to the realization of the American postwar policy design. For the Pridi-Thamrong government, whose foreign and domestic policies were proving increasingly inimical to this plan, American intercession with its mitigating effect on British and French claims against the Thai was now perhaps more to be feared than welcomed.

Khana Ratthaprahan [Military Coup] and Pridi's Fall from Power

In the postwar era Britain's economic decline, coupled with the more sympathetic American attitudes towards Thai sovereignty, allowed the U.S. to make substantial commercial inroads in Thailand. Whereas formerly the United States had obtained its quotas of Siamese rubber and tin through British Malaya, by 1947 it was obtaining a large proportion of these commodities directly.[50] Extension of mining rights to Anaconda, the large American conglomerate, were under consideration thereby ending a long-standing monopoly of British and Australian firms in Thailand. The success of the American aviation firms Pan-American and Trans-Asiatic Airlines similarly underscored the eclipse of British commercial hegemony by growing American business interests. Indeed, the relatively miniscule representation of U.S. corporations in pre-war Siam had burgeoned in the post-war era to include several dozen companies engaged in various trades and industries.[51] The emergence of the Bangkok Post, founded by former O.S.S. officer Alexander MacDonald, as a beacon of American influence in the Siamese capital was yet another indication of the increased orientation towards the United States nurtured by Thailand's wartime experience.[52] Even with the apparent increase of foreign investment in Thailand, the Thamrong government remained beset by serious economic difficulties. Siamese assets, amounting to an estimated thirty million dollars, held by the United States since the war, were not released until April of 1947.[53] Although Pridi was able to secure loans from the United States and India,[54] the government was forced to resort to the sale of gold bullion in order to secure valuable foreign exchange for the purchase of imports. Most of the gold was sold in the United States with a corresponding value of nearly $9 million accruing to the Thai government. Efforts by the government to control foreign exchange were undermined by black market profiteers who offered more than twice the bank rate for the American dollar and the British pound sterling.[55] Yet, to some extent, the Pridi-Thamrong government had succeeded in regulating the nation's economy. Inflation had halted by 1947 with the controls on currency stabilizing circulation at slightly more than two billion baht. This corresponded with a leveling out in Thailand's cost of living index which, from the middle of 1947, saw prices decline slightly.[56]

However, many of the issues upon which the government was criticized persisted. Pridi continued to be implicated in the death of the King. In defiance of government regulations, corruption and blackmarketeering continued unabated within and without the civil administration. Throughout the countryside the activities of the Sua, Thai bandits whose numbers had been augmented by disaffected soldiers, threatened the safety of the general populace. In September the government's inability to provide allotments of rice to those areas where shortages were most acute provoked a march on Parliament led by hundreds of railway workers.[57] The following month Phim Thai, the Bangkok daily, reported that of 2700 sacks of rice allotted to five provinces, only one province had actually received its quota with the remainder of the allotment being appropriated by government officials for redistribution on the lucrative black market.[58]

It seems clear that during the fall of 1947 the opportunity and motivation for military intervention reached optimal levels. Consistent economic setbacks had sharpened the rivalry between the government and the Khuang-Pramoj opposition. The withering criticism of the Pridi-Thamrong administration, both from its opponents in the Assembly and in the Bangkok press, elicited harsh reprisals on the part of the government. A number of newspapers were closed down and one newspaper editor was shot and killed.[59] Members of Khuang's Democrat party were threatened with armed violence by the remnants of Pridi's Seri Thai which, since the war, had come to exist as a sort of paramilitary force. Against this background of imminent political chaos, four army officers, none of whom had the national stature or actual command of troops requisite to launch a coup d'état, plotted the government's overthrow. Significantly, Phin Chunnahawan, the chief force behind the group, had commanded the third division of the Northern Army which had been disgraced in the aftermath of the Japanese surrender.[60] His right-hand man, Colonel Phao Sriyanon, like Phin, had been forced into "retirement" following the war. The other principal planners of the coup included Kat Katsongkhram, an Air Force group captain, and Kan Chamnongphumiwet, an Army colonel, who had also been relieved of duty in 1946.

The philosophy of the coup planners, as embodied in their manifesto, seemed rather simple.[61] They believed that the policies and actions of the Pridi-Thamrong government threatened to subvert the traditional values of Religion, King and Country upon which Thai society was based. Like the Khuang-Seni coalition, the military feared the socialist precepts espoused by Pridi and regarded him as anti-royalist and even communistic in his ideology. The inconclusive investigation of Ananda's death only served to strengthen these convictions as well as to convince the coup planners that their actions would be justified. Yet, aside from the ideological basis of the proposed coup, there were, in fact, many practical considerations at play. Pridi's concessions to the Allies, made to insure national sovereignty and acceptance in the postwar international order, were clearly resented. The willing return of hard-won military gains in Northern Thailand was viewed as a repudiation of a stridently irredentist national character with which the officer corps had been imbued during the Phibul regime. Similarly, the government's retrocession of the disputed Mekong territories was regarded by Pridi's opponents as being unduly subservient to a historically antagonist French colonial regime. Under the Phibul regime, Siamese acquisition of the provinces in question had been cause for proclamation of a national holiday which was contritely cancelled by Pridi immediately following the war. Khuang, whose ancestoral homeland was situated in the area now relinquished to France had been the motivating force behind the opposition to the return of the territories and subsequent Thai demands for the creation of independent states in the region.[62]

Pridi's recognition of the Soviet Union and his government's repeal of the anti-communist legislation, which had ironically originated as a measure taken against his own alleged leftist orientation, provided further basis for attacks upon his governance. Those elements within both the military and the Khuang-Seni coalition, many of whom had long been suspicious of Pridi's politics, saw in many of his policy initiatives the threat of incipient communism. Thus, while absolving his party of any complicity in the November 1947 coup which toppled the Pridi-Thamrong government, Seni Pramoj was to observe that:

> . . . it may be admitted that the Democrat Party did not oppose a coup that could avert the replacement of constitutional monarchy by a communist state[63]

Significantly Pridi's opponents were able to draw a strong if largely unsubstantiated link between his supposed communist leanings and the untimely death of King Ananda, thereby assailing the nature of his government's policies in the name of a universal and traditional reverence for the monarchy. Invocations of a perceived threat to the country's cultural foundations were similarly employed in denouncing Pridi's liberalization of Phibul's restrictions on Thailand's prominent Chinese minority.

Although Pridi and Thamrong were conscious of the weakening position of their government, there appeared to be little they could do to control the unfolding of events which culminated in the coup d'état. By relying on the influence of Adul Aduldejcharat, whom Pridi had appointed as Army Commander-in-Chief, to maintain the allegiance of the Army, the government clearly underestimated the solidarity that four years of war had forged between the officer corps and the Army's rank and file. In the days before the coup Adul's tenuous authority over the Army became increasingly obvious and it appears that in police and military circles the impending coup d'état became an open secret.[64] Mutual recriminations between Adul and Thamrong characterized the final days of the Pridi-Thamrong regime. By the time the decision to launch the coup d'état was made the coup's planners had succeeded in enlisting the participation of Phibul, who despite a purported initial reluctance, threw his considerable influence behind the group. Indeed Phibul's support was the trump card of the coup planners. His status as a national hero was popularly acknowledged, particularly within the ranks of the armed forces. Moreover, his presence vindicated the motives of the officers contriving to usurp the duly elected government by demonstrating that they were not merely seeking to wrest power for themselves but sought to restore a national hero to his rightful place.

When, in the early morning hours of November ninth, the army moved to take control, the government was caught unawares. Thamrong, who a few days before had been warned by Phibul himself of a probable coup attempt, was attending a dance at the Amphorn Gardens in central Bangkok.[65] Enjoying a quiet evening at Tha Chang, his private residence, Pridi was awakened by messengers from Adul and made good his escape in a motor launch only minutes before soldiers from the Army's second battalion arrived to take him into custody.[66] Thamrong also narrowly escaped capture, leaving the Amphorn Gardens shortly before an armed delegation led by Sarit Thanarat, commander of the Bangkok-based 1st Regiment, came to arrest him.[67] As the events of the coup unfolded it became clear that inspite of the substantial influence held by Phibul, his presumed ascendance was actually that of a nominal leader. The fundamental control of the Army had fallen into the hands of Phin, Phao and most prominently, Sarit. It had been Sarit's decision to activate his strategically situated 1st Army Regiment in support of the coup attempt which proved decisive to the plot's success.[68] The presence of tanks commandeered by Sarit's troops has been cited as the critical factor in the reluctance of Pridi's forces to attempt armed resistance to the coup.[69] Thus, while Phibul's complicity in the coup was clear, his actual role seems to have been essentially symbolic. This interpretation of his part in the overthrow of the Pridi-Thamrong government is strengthened by the testimony of his wife La-iad who suggests that Phibul's support of the coup was largely motivated by his fear for the safety of his two eldest sons, who had been drafted into the coup group by junior officers anxious to elicit participation of the country's most prominent military figure.[70]

Plainly it would have been imprudent for the coup's promoters to have installed Phibul as Thailand's new head of state. However, his restoration as Army Commander-in-Chief came shortly after the replacement of Pridi's 1946 constitution with one prepared by the Army's coup leaders. An examination of the provisions of this constitution suggests that, by increasing the theoretical powers of the monarchy in respect to creation and approval of legislative amendments, the Army sought to win the favour of the royalists who comprised a majority in the Khuang-Seni coalition.[71] Phibul's subsequent overtures to Khuang to accept the Prime Ministership further emphasized the fact that it was necessary for the military to win the support of the Khuang-Seni group. Phibul's distasteful reputation in the capital cities of the victorious Allied nations, coupled with the absence of any military leader of similar stature, meant that the presence of Khuang or Seni at the helm of state was essential if the new government was to avoid the potentially harmful disapproval of the allies. Thus, although the military could claim, as it did in its coup manifesto,[72] to have saved the nation from political and economic chaos, it was still constrained by the force of international opinion to share its power, at least initially.

The speed with which the transfer of power from the coup group to the Khuang-led cabinet took place, perhaps presupposes that an agreement between Khuang and the coup's leaders took place before November 9.[73]

Indeed Thawee Bunyaketu has, in his memoirs, speculated on such a course of events.[74] While the extent of Khuang's involvement in the coup remains unclear, it is reasonable to assume that the military leaders recognized that they were unlikely to secure international recognition for their regime without Khuang's co-operation either before or shortly after the coup d'etat. As with the military, the Khuang-Seni coalition feared the apparent threat to the constitutional monarchy posed by the policies of the Pridi-Thamrong government and, as Seni has indicated, were unlikely to oppose any effort to usurp its governance. Moreover, the conviction that Pridi was about to implement a form of state socialism under the auspices of the Pan-Southeast Asian League was a fear shared by both groups and clearly reckoned in the decision of the Army's leaders to launch the coup.[75] Following the coup, the arrests of several government deputies from Northeastern Thailand who had been active in the League, and their incarceration on charges of "plotting to establish a separatist state" made evident the disapprobation with which Pridi's opponents regarded his proposed political union with the socialist-oriented movements for national self-determination currently on the rise throughout the region.[76]

If the circumstances under which Pridi's civilian coalition came to power predilected its hasty downfall, it is important to recognize that the events which followed the deposal of the Pridi-Thamrong regime brought into play a similar set of circumstances. Although Khuang accepted the Army's offer to form a government, thus mitigating any reticence diplomats in Washington or Whitehall might have had about affording recognition to a new Thai regime, the coup had made amply clear that this and any future administrations would retain authority only at the behest of the military. Therefore, it was not surprising that, five months after the coup which ousted Pridi, the resignation of the successor government was effected by the coup leaders. In the months following the coup the military produced stories of communist and republican plots, of the intended murder of King Bhoomipol and the threat of a Seri Thai counter-coup; all in order to justify its actions. Similarly, as spokesman for the army leaders, Phibul vindicated the deposition of Khuang's government as necessary to prevent an imminent and potentially sanguinary clash between the civilian and military politicians.[77] With the removal of Khuang's administration, the final obstacle to an uncontested military domination of Thai politics was eliminated. Phibul's seizure of the reigns of power signalled the outset of an enduring military governance which would, somewhat ironically, be the beneficiary of the support of those same nation states whose influence had three years earlier precipitated its downfall.

CHAPTER SIX - ASSESSING ALLIED POLICIES AND PRIDI'S FALL - WILLING COMPLICITY OR TACIT APPROVAL?

Clearly the events of World War Two brought a degree of complexity and intensity to Thai-American relations that contrasted sharply with their quiet uneventfulness in the preceeding era. Of the many factors responsible for changing these former relations, the most prominent were the emergence of Thai nationalism and a renascent Western influence in Southeast Asia as the war drew to a close. The major role played by the United States in defeating the Axis powers and, more specifically, the close association of American intelligence operatives with their Free Thai counterparts, brought about the demise of Phibul's military regime and made possible what was regarded as substantial progress in the evolution of democratic government in Thailand. However, in the immediate postwar era, fundamental differences between the United States and Britain regarding the future status of Thailand had deleterious effects upon both the political and economic capacities of the civilian regime to succeeed in its experiment with constitutional governance. As they came to bear upon Thailand's experiment with parliamentary democracy, the decay of Anglo-American relations had a twofold effect. First, as a result of the increasingly open animosity and distrust which characterized Allied attempts to formulate postwar policy, it became clear to Siamese politicians of all ideological shades that their nation's future was contingent upon an ability to maintain close relations with the United States, while avoiding any direct affront to Britain's interests in

Southeast Asia. For this reason, Pridi's government strove to expedite settlements with the "Big Five" nations and to ensure every effort was made to pay Thailand's wartime indemnities. While these policies appeared likely to enhance the cause of democratic government in Thailand, they in fact invited vigorous criticism from the government's royalist and fascist opponents. The Anglo-American rivalry which saw U.S. interests supplant Britain's long-standing preeminence in Thailand's economic affairs, subsequently forced an unsteady compromise on issues vital to the preservation of Pridi's regime and the experiment with democracy in Thailand. Through a policy of ardent opposition to the restoration of colonial authority in Southeast Asia, the United States eliminated the opportunity for a concerted Allied reduction of the size and influence of the Thai military--an act which would have greatly assisted the civilian leaders in fostering the emergence of a democratic government. Similarly, the concomitant imposition of rice indemnities and trade restrictions by the Allies seriously hampered Thailand's postwar economic recovery.

The second, and ultimately most consequential effect of the Anglo-American rivalry was manifested in the changing American policy towards Thailand and indeed, all of Southeast Asia. By 1947 a foreign policy predicated on the eradication of European imperialism gave way to consideration of measures to deter the eventuality of communist agression in the Southeast Asian mainland. American policymakers thus became less interested in the successful evolution of a constitutional government in Thailand and more concerned with the task of providing military security for the entire region. Pridi's government faced the unlucky coincidence of its brief existence paralleling this transition in U.S. foreign policy and, as events have demonstrated, paid the price of ruinous circumstance. Convinced of the importance of regional co-operation, Pridi sought to establish an interdependent union of emerging Southeast Asian states at a time when America's erstwhile advocacy of national self-determination was supplanted by a concern for the area's vulnerability to communist ideologies. By late 1946, U.S. diplomats regarded the reinstatement of French sovereignty in Indochina as preferable to the proliferation of Vietnamese communism. To these policymakers, for whom Thailand was perhaps naively seen as an "oasis of stability in a region of turmoil," the success of the Vietminh in Indochina stayed any reluctance to co-operate closely with an authoritarian military regime committed to anti-communist doctrines. Clearly Pridi's fledgling regime was not in this category. Free access to the area's resources and trade--so essential to the industrial recovery of Japan and the development of a non-communist Far East--was in no way consistent with aims of the proposed Pan Southeast Asian Union. Moreover, newly augmented American commercial interests in Thailand and throughout the region were threatened by the plan.

It is significant that, by way of justifying the usurpation of civilian government, Phibul explained his actions on the grounds that "a clash between the military and any government they did not like was inevitable" and that he believed in view of this situation "he himself had the best chance of controlling both factions."[1] Clearly the threat of military takeover was imminent throughout 1946 and, as has been noted, was a concern often expressed to U.S. representatives by members of the civilian government. In petitioning their U.S. counterparts for support, Thailand's civilian politicians assumed continuation of an American foreign policy which during the war years had reflected thorough-going advocacy and admiration for "Thai democracy." The close relationship wartime had forged between the Free Thai politicians and American O.S.S. personnel no doubt encouraged this perception and indeed may have fostered the supposition that U.S. support for a constitutional government could be counted on. However, it is probable that the split in the ranks of the civilian government that placed the Khuang-Seni coalition in virulent opposition to Pridi's regime changed this perception. Seni Pramoj had formed remarkably strong associations with American diplomatic representatives and, upon breaking with Pridi over the latter's interference in the conduct of foreign relations inveighed against Pridi's proposed settlements with Britain and France. In Seni's own words:

> I wondered how one could agree in this fashion to place oneself formally at the mercy of the British, and then expect that everything would turn out to be favourable in actuality. I tended to believe in a current speculation that Pridi thus wanted to undermine my standing as a national hero.[2]

That Pridi's alleged appeasement of European imperialism threatened the stability of his government was a fact well known to U.S. diplomats. Yet inspite of what has been construed as the Americans' "timely and mitigating" intercession on Thailand's behalf in the Anglo-Thai negotiations of December 1945, it is clear that the U.S. intervention obviated any measure of restraint on the country's wartime fascists and ultimately hampered Siam's economic recovery. Furthermore, the American decision to side with the Thai against the British must be seen as an action taken against the threat of renascent imperialism rather than in the interests of democratic governance. By 1946, subsequent Thai negotiations with France further emphasized this transition in U.S. policy vis-à-vis Thailand. Although aware of the increasingly tenuous position of Pridi's regime, especially in respect to the issue of a territorial settlement with the French, American advisors counseled with growing conviction the desirability of prompt retrocession of the disputed provinces to French sovereignty.

Remarkably, these events of late 1946 coincided with the recognition of a salient threat to American interests posed by communism in Indochina. Moreover, it is worth noting that 1946 was a time of considerable political freedom within Thailand. Under Pridi, the active organization of political parties had seen even the communists make a bid for public recognition and support which culminated in the election of a single member to the national parliament.[3] The establishment of national trade unions, dominated by Chinese labourers and opposed to the resumption of military administered state industry by the compradore class was also a Pridi innovation calculated to broaden his base of support,[4] but certain to revive longstanding suspicions of his "communist leanings." Pridi was well aware that steps needed to be taken to limit the strength of the military. These measures were embodied in his 1946 constitution which officially prohibited military officers from involvement in political activities.[5] Furthermore, it is evident that because of its dire financial state the Pridi-Thamrong regime was preparing, in late 1947, to reduce armed forces expenditures substantially and thereby lower the cost of government.

The events through which the military took power reveal something more of the circumstances which lead to the coup d'état of November 1947. While the military accepted the opportunity to intervene, the tacit approval of the Khuang-Seni coalition was of great importance to both groups. Rivalry between civil and military factions which had characterized Thai politics since 1933, reverted to a scheme in which the royalists, having failed to defeat Pridi's coalition in parliament, were, as Seni has noted, willing to accept military usurpation of a "dangerously liberal" government. Khuang's efforts to preserve a semblance of civilian rule and his eventual acquiescence in the imposition of military rule is really nothing more than a denouement to this chapter of Thai history. Phibul, who as we have seen came to power as a nominal leader of two contending junior military factions, (one led by Phao, the other by Generals Phin and Sarit), undoubtedly played an important part in restoring military hegemony in Thai politics and, subsequently, in establishing Thailand as a bastion of anti-communism in Southeast Asia. Furthermore it is clear that without a leader of Phibul's stature, who could convince the Khuang-Seni clique to act as caretakers in a transition to military government, the junior military group could claim no legitimacy.

The failure of constitutional governance evinced by the 1947 coup was really the failure of the civilian regime and its ostensible allies to develop an institutionalized political base. As this failure became obvious to Thailand's military bureaucracy--which under Japanese influence had taken steps to organize such a polity--the probability of military intervention increased. The removal of Pridi and the Thai "liberals" as an active political force was thus effected by forces both within and without their control. The death of Ananda Mahidol remained Pridi's personal nemesis. Thailand's economy, although showing significant recovery by 1947, was still subverted by an enormous black market and a poor balance of payments. The Thai rice indemnity, which was finally paid out in September of 1947, continued to provide sustenance for the war torn nations of the region. With Burma in the throes of civil war, Thailand's role as the region's "rice bowl" was essential to British and American plans for East Asian recovery. The bulk of Thailand's tin and rubber was now exported to the United States.[6] Significantly, American support by way of payment for several million dollars worth of Siamese tin which had been mysteriously withheld from the ill-fated Thamrong regime was granted to Khuang's transitional government.[7]

Whether American involvement in the events which brought about the coup can be established as an immediate determining factor remains unclear. At least one contemporary observer has alleged that prior to the military takeover financial aid was forwarded to Phibul from U.S. representatives via the Chinese embassy in Bangkok.[8] Other area specialists, notably John

Coast and Frank C. Darling have avoided suggestions of anything more than circumstantial American culpability. They have however pointed to what amounts to a transition in American policy in response to "a world situation which had drastically changed"[9]--in short a recognition of the fact that in November of 1947 Thailand was almost the only state in Southeast Asia not inflamed by leftist insurgency. Moreover, these scholars point to the curious anomaly which saw both British and American recognition of Khuang's civilian caretaker government withheld for more than three months; while Phibul's cabinet, composed exclusively of military officers, waited a mere three weeks to have the power claimed five months previously sanctioned by the Allies.[10]

To explain the speedy return of the Phibul government to the "good graces" of Britain and the United States these scholars pointed to the unfolding of a situation in which Allied support for the military became the surest means of detering communist aggression. In Thailand, as in other nations of the region, such as Indonesia, the military remains, by the strength of its bureaucratic structure, the institution best equipped to counter Marxist revolution. As a dominant mode of social mobility the officer corps attracts a class of individuals who play an increasingly significant part in the process of political modernization. Ultimately, as guardians of social order the military is allied with traditional compradore landowners and businessmen. Beyond constituting a formidable barrier to rapid social change this marriage of capital and power affords the military access to foreign technology and the opportunity to assume greater responsibility in the direction of economic development. In Thailand's case the association of the officer corps with members of the traditional Sakdina elite overcame the challenge of Pridi Panomyong's agrarian socialism. Moreover, in doing so the military was able to diversify and strengthen its prominent role in Thai political life.

In Indonesia and Burma the military have played similarly dominant roles in the struggle for political power. The Burmese experience, like that of the Thai, involved the formation of a political structure in the "power vacuum" created by the incursion of World War II. Under General Aung San an anti-British and eventually anti-Japanese resistance army was in the postwar era transformed into an effective force against the insurgencies which plagued the newly independent Burmese state.[11] When in a 1962 coup, the Burmese military stepped in to ursurp a fractious and ineffectual civilian regime, the actions of the army parallel events in Thailand during 1947-48. As in Thailand, postwar opportunity to assume a decisive role in political modernization fostered a sense of identity and professionalism within the military. More recently, in Indonesia, during the tumultuous events of Gestapu the military under General Suharto demonstrated its efficiency in derailing potential rivals to its political hegemony. In Indonesia as in Thailand the military has shown the ability to eliminate not only its erstwhile opponents on the left but, if necessary, those centrists likely to promote instability.

What does then clearly emerge from an examination of wartime politics and civil-military relations in Thailand? Foremost is the fact that although formally independent, Thailand has throughout its recent history been a pawn of the Great Powers. Owing to a strategic geographic situation and abundant natural resources it became a focal point of Great Power interests from the outset to the aftermath of the Second World War. Just as the threat of the impending global conflict gave rise to the domination of Thailand's military faction, so did war's termination allow the brief florescence of parliamentary government. As we have seen, the subsequent fragmentation of the civilian coalition owed much to the inconsistency and outright duplicity which characterized Anglo-American policies in Southeast Asia. The circumstances of the settlements, indemnities and treaties which ended the war exposed strong ideological differences between Pridi's Free Thai "liberals" and the Sakdina elite of Khuang Aphaiwong and the Pramoj brothers. Pridi's vision of a thoroughly neutral Thailand assuming the vanguard position in the movement for national self determination in Southeast Asia required a clean if painful break with the imperial influence to which the Thai had long been subject. By embracing the concept of regional co-operation as an alternative to Great Power domination, Pridi also placed himself in opposition to the interests of Thailand's compradore class. Moreover, in seeking to establish an alliance of the socialist governments emerging in neighbouring Southeast Asian nations, Pridi simultaneously provoked renewed suspicions of his communist associations that were ultimately used to justify his government's removal.[12]

Viewed in retrospect, the brief interregnum of civilian rule in Thailand should also be considered as an heuristic illustration of the use of military power in political affairs. The circumstances which brought about the failure of civilian rule in Thailand, as in many developing nations, were fostered by the rivalries of powerful foreign interests. The political history of postwar Southeast Asia suggests that unless accepted procedures for the resolution of political issues can become institutionalized, all power reverts to the military. In Thailand's case, while efforts were made to develop parliamentary government based on constitutional rule the military remained a strong political force. Without the eradication of military oligarchies which cleared the way for the growth of democratic institutions in other nations of the world, the military in Thailand remained a barrier on the road to constitutional government. Yet even had the mutual recriminations of the Allies been set aside and, as suggested by the British, a period of postwar trusteeship imposed in the interests of "Thai democracy" it is by no means certain that military domination could have been forestalled. The transition in foreign policy priorities which followed the Truman doctrine's explicit reappraisal of U.S. national security interests was to make the Thai military the prime beneficiary of increasing Western support during the wave of revolt which shook all of postwar Southeast Asia. Beyond this, an objective study must point to the fact that while foreign influence has often succeeded in establishing the "trappings of democracy" in nations of the developing world, in many nominally "democratic" states, constitutions and elections remain devoid of any political meaning for all but a few politically sophisticated citizens. In this sense the weakness of civilian government must be attributed to the fact that the force of violence has, often with the complicity of the Great Powers, become an accepted mode of political legitimation. To understand military ascendance in Thailand and other nations of Southeast Asia, the officer class must be seen as the prime exponent of bureaucratic and technological innovation.[13] The Thai military has, as we have seen, consistently possessed a vastly superior organization to its civilian counterparts and, in the absence of strong public attachment to the institutions of civil authority, has profited by it. Military domination of contemporary politics in Thailand can thus be seen as resulting as much from the vicissitudes of postwar international relations as from characteristics inherent in Thai society and culture.

NOTES
CHAPTER ONE

[1] John Crawfurd, *Journal of an Embassy to the Courts of Siam and Cochin China*, Vol. I (London: Holburn Publishers, 1830), p. 221.

[2] For a discussion of this change in Siamese statecraft see Benjamin Batson, "The End of the Absolute Monarchy in Siam" (Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 1977), pp. 17-20.

[3] See Prince Damrong quoted from "Conditions Existing During the Establishment of the Ministry of the Interior" in William L. Siffin, *The Thai Bureaucracy, Institutional Change and Development* (Honolulu: East-West Press, 1966), p. 68.

[4] D.G.E. Hall, *A History of Southeast Asia* (London: Macmillan and Company Ltd., 1955), p. 582.

[5] Walter F. Vella, *The Impact of the West on Government in Thailand* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1955), p. 334.

[6] M.L. Manich Jumsai, *History of Anglo-Thai Relations* (Bangkok: Chalermint Publishers, 1970), p. 95.

[7] James Ingram, *Economic Change in Thailand 1850-1970* (Stanford University Press, 1971), pp. 173-74.

[8] Pierre Fistié, *L'évolution de la Thailande Contemporaine* (Paris: Armand Colin Pub., 1967), p. 89.

[9] George Leighton Lafuze, "Great Britain, France and the Siamese Question 1885-1904" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois, 1935), p.4.

[10] Jumsai, *op*. *cit*., p. 255.

[11] Hall, *op*. *cit*., pp. 582-83.

[12] Vella, *op*. *cit*. p. 335. Also see Tej Bunnaj, "The Provincial Administration of Siam from 1892-1915" (Ph.d. diss., Oxford University, 1968).

[13] Chula Chakrabongse, *The Lords of Life* (New York: Toplinger Publishers, 1960), p. 11.

[14] J.G.D. Campbell, *Siam in the Twentieth Century* (London: Edward Arnold Pub., 1902), p. 321.

[15] See David A. Wilson, "The Military in Thai Politics" in J.J. Johnson ed., *The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1962), p. 253. Also see Morris Janowitz, *The Military in the Political Development of New Nations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), pp. 1, 27-29.

16 On the role of the missionaries see Thawatt Mokarapong, "The June Revolution of 1932 in Thailand: A Study in Political Behaviour" (Ph.d. diss., Indiana University, 1962), pp. 96-98 and Frank C. Darling, Thailand and the United States (Washington D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1965), pp. 12-15.

17 Most significant in the development of this sentiment was an event of 1896 involving an Anglo-French dispute over coterminus colonial territories in the province of Muong Sing, in northern Siam. Negotiations between Britain and France concluded with the province being ceded to the French on the condition that France guarantee the future territorial integrity of the Menam Chaophrya valley area. To seal this arrangement Britain concluded an agreement with the Siamese in which Siam promised never to cede any part of her territory to a third power nor to grant to any third power any diplomatic advantage, without prior British approval.

18 Nibondh Sasidhorn, "The United States and Extraterritoriality in Thailand: Some Unique Aspects of Anglo-Thai Relations" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1960), p. 305. This unpublished thesis provides an excellent background on early U.S. - Thai diplomatic relations and the evolution of extraterritorial jurisdiction in Siam.

19 Ibid., pp. 298-306.

20 Ibid., p. 304.

21 Francis B. Sayre, "The Passing of Extraterritoriality in Siam," American Council of the Institute of Pacific Relations, (New York 1928), p. 4. Also see Sayre's article entitled "Siam's Fight for Sovereignty", Atlantic Monthly, (November, 1927), pp. 674-89.

22 Sayre, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

23 Darling, op. cit., p. 19.

24 For a discussion of this coup attempt see Mokarapong op. cit., p. 92 who notes the influence of events in China on the revolutionary ambitions of the Siamese military.

25 It is important to note that the representatives of both Britain (Josiah Crosby) and the United States (Howard Stevens) in Bangkok expressed unequivocal opposition to the "revolutionary" implementation of constitutional government by the Peoples Party following the 1932 coup d'etat.

NOTES
CHAPTER TWO

[1] Anne Vimille, "Luttes de classes en Thailande," *Critiques de l'économie politique*, No. 13-14, (Oct. - Dec., 1973), p. 200.

[2] David A. Wilson, *Politics in Thailand* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1962) p. 22. Also see Walter F . Vella, *The Impact of the West on Government in Thailand* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1955), pp. 375-76.

[3] Thawatt Mokarapong, "The June Revolution of 1932 in Thailand: A Study in Political Behavior," (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1962), p. 137.

[4] Gerald Sparrow, *Land of the Moonflower* (London: Elek Books, 1955), p. 72.

[5] Mokarapong, *op*. *cit*., p. 153.

[6] *Ibid*., p. 148.

[7] Ibid., p. 166. The eight ministries included the Ministry of War, the Interior, Foreign Affairs, Agriculture, Commerce, Education, Justice, Finance and Palace Affairs. Also see John Coast: *Some Aspects of Siamese Politics* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1953), p. 5.

[8] The Six Principles of the Peoples Party were:
1) The independence of the country, such as the political, judicial and economic independence must be maintained.
2) Peace and security within the country must be preserved; an effort must be made to reduce crimes.
3) A national economic plan must be drawn up to ensure the economic well-being of the people. The new government must provide work for every citizen and will not allow the people to starve.
4) Equal rights and privileges for everyone must be guaranteed. The royalty must not be allowed to have more privileges than the people, as was the case before.
5) The people shall have liberty and freedom provided that the exercise of liberty and freedom is not in conflict with the above four points.
6) The people must be given the greatest education possible.

For an outline of the policies of the Peoples Party see Kenneth Perry Landon; *Siam in Transition* (New York: Greenwood Pub. 1968).

[9] Pierre Fistié, *Sous-dévelopment et Utopie au Siam* (Paris, Mouton and Co., 1969) p. 101. Fistie notes Pridi's interest in the economic models established by the German economist Fredrich List, who advocate the goal of national self-sufficiency in trade. Also see Pridi's economic plan in *Ibid*.

[10] Coast, *op*. *cit*., p. 6.

[11] David and Susan Morell, "The Impermanence of Society: Marxism, Buddhism and the Political Philosophy of Thailand's Pridi Banomyong", *Southeast Asia: An International Quarterly*, 2, No. 4 (Fall, 1972), p. 408. Also see Mokarapang, *op*. *cit*. p. 187.

[12] *Ibid*., p. 421.

[13] Fistie, *op*. *cit*., pp. 101-102.

[14] His Majesty King Prachathipok's comments on Pridi's Economic Plan in: *Thai Politics 1932-57 Extracts and Documents*, ed. Thak Chaloemtiarana (Bangkok: Social Science Association of Thailand, 1978), p. 235.

[15] Mokarapong, *op*.*cit*., p. 190.

[16] *Ibid*., p. 193.

[17] Fistié, *op*. *cit*. pp. 105-106.

[18] *Ibid*., p. 104.

[19] Mokarapong, *op*. *cit*., p. 198 cites the *Bangkok Daily Mail*, April 3, 1933.

[20] *Ibid*., p. 199. Mokarapong agrees with the theory that Pridi was lead into the trap of being charged with "communism" by opponents who initially encouraged his economic ideas.

[21] *Ibid*., p. 238.

[22] *Ibid*., pp. 236-37.

[23] *Ibid*., pp. 242-43. Following the expulsion of the Pridi faction, the junior army clique became convinced that Manopakorn bore them malice and intended to act against them.

[24] Jin Vibhatakarasa, "The Military in Politics, A Study of Military Leadership in Thailand," (Ph.D. diss., University of Oregon, 1966), p. 101.

[25] Mokarapong, *op*. *cit*., p. 215.

[26] Benjamin Batson ed., *Siam's Political Future: Documents from the End of the Absolute Monarchy*, Data Paper No. 96, Southeast Asia Program Dept. of Asian Studies, (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1974), p. 90.

[27] E. Thadeus Flood,"Japan's Relations with Thailand 1928-41" (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1967), p. 741.

[28] John L. Christian and Nobatake Ike, "Thailand in Japan's Foreign Relations," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 15, (April 1942), p. 205.

[29] Flood, *op*. *cit*., p. 744.

30 Helmut Callis, Foreign Capital in Southeast Asia (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1942), p. 50.

31 Josiah Crosby, "The Failure of Constitutional Government in Siam," Asiatic Review, No. 39. (Oct. 1943), p. 417.

32 Frank C. Darling, "American Influence on the Evolution of Constitutional Government in Thailand" (Ph.D. diss., The American University, 1961), p. 124.

33 Coast, op. cit., p. 10.

34 Flood, op. cit., p. 748.

35 Christian and Ike, op. cit., p. 206.

36 Kate Mitchell, "Thailand - A New Key Area," Amerasia, 5. No. 9 (November 1941), p. 387.

37 Helmut Callis, op. cit., p. 59.

38 Ibid., pp. 60-63.

39 Pridi's group as well as coup promoters in the military recognized that British acquiescence in the policies of the new regime was dependent upon maintenance of the status-quo in Anglo-Thai commercial relations.

40 Cited in Mitchell, op. cit., pg. 388.

41 Dorothy Woodman, "Soldier and Statesman, Phibul and Pridi," Asian Horizon, vol. I, (1948), p. 15.

42 Flood, op. cit. p. 749.

43 Willard Price , "Siam turns to Army Rule," Asia (May, 1938), p. 301.

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[2] Josiah Crosby, *Siam: the Crossroads* (London: Hollis and Carter, 1945), p. 127.

[3] E. Thadeus Flood, "Japan's Relations with Thailand 1928-41," (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1967), pp. 176-77.

[4] *Ibid*.

[5] Virginia Thompson, "Thai Irredenta - Internal and External," *Far Eastern Survey* 9, No. 21 (October 23, 1940), p. 248.

[6] *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter F.R.U.S.), (1939), pp. 118-21.

[7] James A. Martin, "A History of the Diplomatic Relations Between Thailand and the U.S.A." (New Haven: Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1948), p. 345.

[8] *F.R.U.S.*, (1940, vol. 4) Secretary of State to Minister in Bangkok Telegram 751G/92/3, p. 84.

[9] *F.R.U.S.*, (1940, vol. 4) Minister at Bangkok to Secretary of State Telegram 751G/92/2 p. 74.

[10] *F.R.U.S.*, (1940, vol. 4) Secretary of State to Minister in Bangkok, Telegram 751G 92/6 p. 107-8.

[11] *F.R.U.S.*, (1940, vol. 4) Minister in Bangkok to Secretary of State, Telegram 751G/92/22 pp. 117-18.

[12] *Ibid*.

[13] J.C. Grew *Ten Years in Japan* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1944), pp. 289-98.

[14] F.C. Jones, *Japan's New Order in East Asia* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1954), p. 235.

[15] Ibid, p. 236. On U.S. refusal also see Pierre Fistié, *L'Évolution de la Thailande Contemporainie* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1967), pp. 175-79 and J. Decoux, *A la barre de l'Indochine* (Paris: Plon, 1949), p. 145.

[16] Jones, *op*. *cit*., p. 237.

[17] Flood, *op*. *cit*. p. 755.

[18] Lawrence H. Shoup, "Shaping the Postwar World: The Council of Foreign Relations and United States War Aims During World War Two," *Insurgent Sociologist*, 5, no. 3 (Spring 1975), p. 14.

[19] Ibid., also see Council of Foreign Relations War and Peace Studies Memorandum (Sept. - Oct., 1940).

[20] Council of Foreign Relations Memorandum EB-26 (January 15, 1941) in Shoup, op. cit., pp. 15-17.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Christopher Thorne, Allies of a Kind (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1978), p. 82.

[23] Diary of Henry Stimson, cited in Thorne op. cit. p. 80.

[24] U.S. Congress Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbour Attack (New York: AMS Press Inc., 1972), pp. 390-91.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Thorne, op. cit., p. 71.

[27] Ibid.

[28] U.S. Congress Joint Committee on Pearl Harbour op. cit., p. 404.

[29] Ibid., p. 406.

[30] Ibid., also see F.R.U.S. (Vol. 5., 1941), pp. 276-77.

[31] Joint Committee, op. cit., p. 407.

[32] Thawee Bunyaketu, "Additional Facts on Incidents in Thailand During World War II," in Thai Politics 1932-1957 Extracts and Documents, Thak Chaloemtiarana ed., (Bangkok: Social Science Association of Thailand, 1978), p. 328.

[33] Thamsook Numnonda, Thailand and the Japanese Presence, 1941-45 (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Research Notes and Discussions No. 6, 1977), p. 14.

[34] Bunyaketu in Chaloemtiarana, Documents, p. 331.

[35] Ibid., p. 333.

[36] Ibid.. p. 336.

[37] Pridi Panomyong, "The Organizations of the Serei Thai Movement" in Chaloemtiarana, Documents, p. 378.

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[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

41 Puey Ungphakon, "Temporary Soldier" in Chaloemtiarana ed., Documents, p. 405.

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43 James Martin, A History of the Diplomatic Relations Between Thailand and the United States (supplementary chapters on the 1929-48 era), (Ph.D. diss., New Haven: Yale University 1948), p. 461.

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57 R. Harris Smith, O.S.S., The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. 296.

58 Life Magazine, October 9, 1942.

59 Thorne, op. cit., p. 213.

[60] Smith, *O.S.S.*, p. 306.

[61] Haseman, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-54.

[62] Smith, *O.S.S.*, p. 300.

[63] Haseman, *op. cit.*, p. 57-58.

[64] *Ibid.*, pp. 62-64.

[65] *Ibid.*, p. 68.

[66] *F.R.U.S.*, vol. 5, (1944), pp. 1312-13.

[67] *Ibid.*

[68] Thorne *op. cit.*, p. 304.

[69] *Ibid.*

[70] Josiah Crosby, "Observations on a Postwar Settlement in Southeast Asia," *International Affairs* (July, 1944), p. 357.

[71] *Ibid.*, p. 362.

[72] O.S.S. Research and Analysis Report #1931, "Problems Confronting the Free Thai Movement" (Feb. 25, 1944).

[73] *Ibid.*

[74] *Ibid.*

[75] Russel Fifield, *Americans in Southeast Asia: The Roots of Committment* (New York: Thomas Crowell, 1973), p. 86. Fifield emphasizes that it became easier for the U.S. to concert its Thai policy with that of the Chinese rather than with that of the British.

[76] Thorne, *op. cit.* p. 464.

[77] F.R.U.S., (1944), Department of State Document 892.01, conversation of O.S.S. and Dept. of State.

[78] Thak Chaloemtiarana, "The Sarit Regime 1957-63, the Formative Years of Modern Thai Politics (Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 1974), p. 9.

[79] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

[80] Ray, *Portraits*, p. 100

[81] O.S.S. Research and Analysis Report #1931 Appendix "C", "Recent Political Developments in Thailand" (Feb. 25, 1944), p. 74.

[82] *Ibid.*

[83] O.S.S. Research and Analysis Report #2114 "Possible Thai Political Developments" (July 14, 1944), pp. 14-16.

[84] James Martin, "Thai-American Relations," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 22, no. 4 (August 1963), p. 465.

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[87] John Coast, *Some Aspects of Siamese Politics* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1953), p. 27.

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[89] *Ibid.*

[90] Virginia Thompson, "Siam and the Great Powers," *Foreign Policy Reports*, 21, no. 24 (March 1, 1946), p. 327.

[91] Haseman, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

[92] *F.R.U.S.*, (Vol. 6, 1945), p. 1240.

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[94] Herbert Fine, "The Liquidation of World War Two in Thailand," *Pacific Historical Review*, 34 No. 3 (1965), p. 68.

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[3] John Coast, Some Aspects of Siamese Politics (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1953), p. 23.

[4] John B. Haseman, The Thai Resistance Movement During The Second World War (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, 1978), p. 145. Also see Coast, op. cit., p. 28.

[5] Herbert Fine, "The Liquidation of World War Two in Thailand," Pacific Historical Review, Vol. 34 (1965), p. 69.

[6] Nicol Smith and Blake Clark, Into Siam: Underground Kingdom (New York: Bobbs Merill, 1946), p. 204.

[7] M.R. Shenoy, "Thailand's Monetary System," International Monetary Fund Papers, (1951), p. 289.

[8] "Siam's Economic Problems," The World Today, no. 4 (January, 1948), pp. 174-78.

[9] Spitzer, op. cit., p. 140.

[10] Virginia Thompson, "Siam and the Great Powers," Foreign Policy Reports (March 1, 1946), p. 328.

[11] O.S.S. Research and Analysis Report #3202 "Economic and Social Basis of Thai Government," (June 25, 1945), p. 5.

[12] Ibid., also see R and A #3207 which suggests Thailand's rural cooperative movement to be an unlikely foundation for political involvement.

[13] Ibid.

[14] O.S.S. Research and Analysis Report #3213, "Extent of Economic Recovery in Siam" (table #7) "Estimated Expenditures and Receipts of Central Government 1946-47 compared with 1937-38," p. 102.

[15] Ibid.

[16] O.S.S. Research and Analysis Report #3736, "Siam's Foreign Relations Affected by Surrender of the Japanese" (August 24, 1945), p. 1. Areas included Kedah, Trengganu, Perlis, Kelantin, Kenteng and Muang Pham.

[17] Ibid., p. 2.

18 Ibid., p. 1.

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20 O.S.S. Research and Analysis Report #2954 "Thailand's Relations with Great Britain in Strategic Malay Peninsula" (August 22, 1945), p. 2.

21 Malcolm Caldwell preface in David Elliot's Thailand:Origins of Military Rule, (London: Zed Press, 1978).

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24 Fine, op. cit., p. 71.

25 O.S.S. Research and Analysis Report #3738 "Thailand Cabinets Since 1944," (May 8, 1946).

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27 Ibid., p. 109.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid., p. 111.

30 This included 1.5 million tons of rice.

31 Fine, op. cit., pp. 71-72.

32 F.R.U.S., vol. 6, (1945), p. 1297 U.S. Dept. of State to British Embassy.

33 F.R.U.S., vol. 6, (1945), Telegram 741.92/9, U.S. Dept. of State to British Embassy, p. 1328.

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35 F.R.U.S., vol. 6, (1945), Aide-Memoire British Embassy to Dept. of State, p. 1340.

36 F.R.U.S., vol. 6, (1945), Aide-Memoire British Embassy to Dept. of State, p. 1345.

37 Coast, op. cit., p. 30.

38 Ibid.

39 Ray, op. cit., pp. 110 and 164. The memoirs of both Seni and Thawee concur on this point.

[40] Ibid., p. 165.

[41] F.R.U.S., vol. 6, (1945), Yost to Acheson, Nov 24, 1945, p. 1373.

[42] Ibid., pp. 1374-76.

[43] Ibid., p. 1376.

[44] Ray, op. cit., pp. 110-111.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Coast, op. cit, pp. 30-32. Also see Pierre Fistie, L'Evolution de la Thailande Contemporaine (Paris: Colin, 1967), p. 202-3.

[47] Fistie, op. cit., p. 203.

[48] Coast, op. cit., p. 32.

[49] Those political parties led by Pridi, Khuang and the Pramoj brothers before the election or official promulgation of the constitution.

[50] Frank C. Darling, Thailand and the United States (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1965), p. 52.

[51] F.R.U.S., vol. 6, (1945), Yost to Acheson Telegram 711.90/12, Dec. 13, 1945, p. 1389.

[52] Ibid.

[53] F.R.U.S., vol. 6, (1945), p. 1397.

[54] Fine, op. cit., p. 82.

[55] New York Times, Dec. 23, 1945; also see Darling op. cit. p. 43.

[56] Frank C. Darling, "British and American influence in Postwar Thailand," Journal of Southeast Asian History, 20, No. 3 (March, 1963), p. 105.

[57] Chun Prabha, "Siam's Democratic King," Asia (March, 1946), p. 117.

[58] Thak Chaloemtiarana, "The Sarit Regime 1957 - 63: the Formative Years of Modern Thai Politics" (Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 1974), p. 14ff.

[59] Fistie, op. cit., p. 194.

[60] Ibid. and Chaloemtiarana, "Sarit."

[61] Memoirs of Seni Pramoj in Ray, Portraits, p. 170.

[62] Production of rice declined by about 40%. See World Today no. 4 (January, 1948), p. 176.

[63] Spitzer, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

[64] *World Today*, p. 177.

[65] Fistié, *op. cit.* p. 203; Chaloemtiarara, "Sarit" notes vote was 65-63.

[66] Ray, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

[67] Coast, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

[68] Darling, *Thailand and the United States*, p. 52.

[69] Chaloemtiarana, "Sarit," p. 35.

[70] *Ibid.*

[71] *F.R.U.S.*, vol. 6, (1945), Yost to State Dept. Dec 27, 1945, p. 1410.

[72] *Ibid.*

[73] *F.R.U.S.*, vol. 8, (1946), Yost of Secretary of State, Jan. 9, 1946, p. 982.

[74] Direk Jayanama, *Siam and World War Two*, Jane Godfey keyes (ed.), (Bangkok: Social Science Association of Thailand, Bangkok, 1978), p. 213.

[75] *Ibid.*

[76] *F.R.U.S.*, vol. 8, (1946), Secretary of State to Yost April 10, 1946, pp. 988-89. On May 27, Pridi issued a personal appeal to U.S. President Truman for support on the Indochina issue.

[77] *Ibid.*

[78] *F.R.U.S.*, vol. 8, (1946), May 8, 1946.

[79] *F.R.U.S.*, vol. 8, (1946), May 27 and 30, 1946.

[80] Rayne Kruger, *The Devil's Discus*, (London: Cassell Publishers, 1964), p. 95.

[81] *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98.

[82] Coast, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

[83] Kruger, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

[84] Coast, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-35.

[85] Chaloemtiarana, "Sarit," p. 28.

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CHAPTER FIVE

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[3] Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, *The Left Wing in Southeast Asia*, (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1956), p. 54.

[4] On Li's importance in Bangkok's diplomatic circles see John Coast, *Some Aspects of Siamese Politics* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1953), p. 36. For information on U.S. administered rice supplies in China see John King Kerry, "Rice Politics," *Foreign Affairs*, 3 (April 1953), p. 455.

[5] Frank N. Trager, *Marxism in Southeast Asia* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1960), p. 82.

[6] Virginia Thompson and Rupert Emerson, *Government and Nationalism in Southeast Asia* (University of Michigan microprints, 1942), p. 217.

[7] Coast, *op*. *cit*., p. 35.

[8] *New York Times*, July 7, 1946, p. 16.

[9] Excerpt from Lord Mountbatten speech at London 18/12/46 in Andrew Gilchrist, *Bangkok Top Secret* (London: Hutchinson, 1970), pp. 204-5.

[10] See memoirs of Thawee Bunyaketu in Jayanata K. Ray, *Portraits of Thai Politics* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1972), p. 113.

[11] *Ibid*., p. 114.

[12] Cited in Thak Chaloemtiarana, "The Sarit Regime 1957-63: The Formative Years of Modern Thai Politics," (Ph.D. diss. Cornell University, 1974), p. 26. *Phim Thai* of April 1, 1947 quoted Lt. General Jira Wichitsongkram as saying that "banditry is like a contagious disease which spreads from the outside into military ranks."

[13] *Ibid*.

[14] Moshe Lissak, *Military Roles in Modernization: Civil Military Relations in Thailand - Burma* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publishers, 1976), p. 91.

[15] Walter F. Vella, *The Impact of the West on Government in Thailand* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1955), p. 387.

[16] W.D. Reeve, *Public Administration in Siam* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1953), p. 36. Reeve notes that rice prices on the blackmarket peaked at nearly L500 per bulk ton.

[17] Anne Vimille, "Luttes de classes en Thailande," *Critiques de l'économie politique*, Nos. 13-14 (Oct.-Dec. 1973), p. 206.

[18] Memoirs of Seni Pramoj in Ray *op.cit.*, p. 170-71.

[19] O.S.S. Research and Analysis Report #3207, "The Status and Significance of the Co-operative Movement," p. 5.

[20] Memoirs of Thawee Bunyaketu in Ray, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

[21] Virginia Thompson, "Government Instability in Siam," *Far Eastern Survey*, 17, No. 16 (Aug. 25, 1948), 186.

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] *Ibid.*

[24] Thamrong held the rank of admiral in the Royal Thai Navy.

[25] The total manpower of the navy was close to ten thousand as compared to a combined army-police strength of over fifty thousand men. See Lissak, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

[26] Of all sectors of Thai society the urbanized bureaucracy were the most severely hit by wartime inflation. See O.S.S. Research and Analysis Report #3759 "Extent of Economic Recovery in Siam" (Section 40, p. 102). Also see Irvin Marshall Rice, "Thailand's Relations with the United States: A Study in Foreign Involvement," (Ph.D. diss., The American University, 1969), p. 184.

[27] Cited from Thai government report *Raingan Prachum Sapha* #7/2490 (May 23, 1947) in Chaloemtiarana, "Sarit," p. 21.

[28] Frank C. Darling, *Thailand and the United States*, (Washington D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1965), p. 52.

[29] *Time* ,Nov. 24, 1947, p. 38.

[30] O.S.S. Research and Analysis Report #3758, "Siam's Postwar Press," p. 4.

[31] Direk Jayanama, *Siam and World War II*, (Bangkok: Social Science Assoc. of Thailand, 1978), p. 244.

[32] *F.R.U.S.*, vol. 8, (1946), pp. 15-20.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 57

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 63.

[35] Ibid., pp. 67 - 69. Acheson to Moffat, Dec. 8, 1946.

[36] F.R.U.S., vol. 6, (1947), pp. 915 - 917. Stanton to Acheson, Jan. 7, 1947.

[37] Virginia Thompson, "Regional Unity in Southern Asia," Pacific Affairs, 21, No. 2. (June, 1948), 172-74.

[38] Coast, op. cit., p. 38.

[39] The nations involved were the United States, Great Britain, France, Siam and Peru. See the New York Times, June 28, 1947, p. 3 and July 6, 1947, p. 25.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Office of Information Research Report #5206 "Prospects for Regional Co-operation in South and Southeast Asia," pp. 3-4. Also see Thompson, "Regional Unity," op. cit., pp. 170-75. Charles F. Keyes, Isan: Regionalism in Northeastern Thailand (Ithaca: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program Data Paper #65, 1967), p. 72. Keyes notes that shortly after World War Two the Khmer independence movement, Khmer Issarak set up a committee in Bangkok. Also after April 24, 1946, when the French recaptured Vientiane, the Lao Issara set up a government in exile in Bangkok. During this period the Vietminh maintained a news agency and arms purchasing office in Bangkok.

[43] William G. Skinner, Leadership and Power in the Chinese Community of Thailand (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), p. 16.

[44] Coast, op. cit., pp. 37-38.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Keyes, op. cit., p. 31.

[47] Ibid. Keyes notes that representatives of Cambodia, Indonesia, Burma and Malaya also signed the League's manifesto. See Vietnam Information Service (1947), pp. 7-8.

[48] George C. Herring, "The Truman Administration and the Restoration of French Sovereignty in Indochina," Diplomatic History, 1. No. 2 (1977), p. 31.

[49] For a detailed discussion of the development of American postwar policy see Michael Schaller, "Securing the Great Crescent: Occupied Japan and the Origins of Containment in Southeast Asia," Journal of American History, 69, No. 2 (Sept. 1982).

[50] Andrew Roth, "Anglo-American Rivalry in Siam," Nation, 166, No. 20 (May 15, 1948), p. 527.

[51] H.C.K. Woddis, "Siam: Cockpit of Anglo-American Interests," *Eastern World*, 3, No. 1 (January 1949), 7-8.

[52] Roth, *op*. *cit*.

[53] James V. Martin, "A History of the Diplomatic Relations Between Thailand and the U.S.A.: Supplementary Chapters on the 1929-48 Era," (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1948), p. 356.

[54] These totalled $10 million and R50 million respectively.

[55] B.R. Shenoy, "The Currency, Banking and Exchange System of Thailand," *International Monetary Fund Staff Papers 1950-51*, Vol. I, p. 296.

[56] *Ibid*., p. 293. Note charts in appendices.

[57] Jin Vibhatakarasa, "The Military in Politics: a Study of Military Leadership in Thailand," (Ph.D. diss., University of Oregon, 1966), p. 259.

[58] Cited in Chaloemtiarana, "Sarit," p. 28.

[59] Coast, *op*. *cit*., p. 39.

[60] Chaloemtiarana, "Sarit," p. 39.

[61] The manifesto of the coup group explained that the coup had been staged to prevent the breakdown of the fundamental institutions of Thai society.

[62] Note previous citations describing the Thai decision to demand creation of independent Loatian and Cambodian states.

[63] Memoirs of Seni Pramoj in Ray, *op*. *cit*., p. 172.

[64] Memoirs of Lady La-iad Songkhramm in *Ray*, *op*. *cit*., p. 207. La-iad maintains that she and Phibul warned Thamrong of the impending coup but he was unresponsive.

[65] Coast, *op*. *cit*., p. 40.

[66] *Ibid*.

[67] Chaloemtiarana, "Sarit," *op*. *cit*., p. 44.

[68] *Ibid*.

[69] Memoirs of Seni Pramoj in Ray, *op*. *cit*., p. 172.

[70] Memoirs of Lady La-iad Songkhramm cited in Ray *op*. *cit*., pp. 209-10.

[71] Article 30 of the military's constitution provided the King with theoretical power to delay the passing of any bill by refusing to sign it. Article 80 of the constitution stated that, in case of emergencies the King could pass laws in the absence of a parliamentary session.

[72] Chaloemtiarana, Thai Politics: Extracts and Documents 1932-1957, Vol. I, "Announcement of the Coup d'etat Group" #I, p. 542.

[73] The transition from military governance to an administration nominally headed by Khuang Aphaiwong took just four days.

[74] Memoirs of Thawee Bunyaketu in Ray, op. cit., p. 120.

[75] See the "Letter and Personal Notes of General Kat Katsongkhram" (part 2, article 13) in Thak Chaloemtiarana ed., Thai Politics 1932-57 Extracts and Documents Vol. I, (Bangkok, Social Science Association, 1978), p. 536.

[76] John S. Girling, Thailand: Society and Politics (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), p. 255.

[77] Coast, op. cit., p. 47.

NOTES
CHAPTER SIX

[1] John Coast, Some Aspects of Siamese Politics, (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1953), p. 47.

[2] Seni Pramoj Memoirs in Jaynata K. Ray, Portraits of Thai Politics, (New Delhi: Orient-Longman Press, 1972), p. 165.

[3] Frank N. Trager, Marxism in Southeast Asia (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1960), p. 93.

[4] Thailand's trade unions were eliminated under the military regime in 1948.

[5] Thak Chaloemtiarana, "The Sarit Regime 1957-63, the Formative Years of Modern Thai Politics," (Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 1974), p. 35.

[6] Andrew Roth, "Anglo-American Rivalry in Siam," Nation, 166, No. 21 (May 15, 1948), p. 527.

[7] H.C.K. Woddis, "Siam: Cockpit of Anglo-American Interests," Eastern World, 3, No. 1, (January, 1949), p. 8.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Frank C. Darling, "American Influence on the Evolution of Government in Thailand," (Ph.D. diss., The American University, 1961), p. 196.

[10] Coast, op. cit. p. 47.

[11] Moshe Lissak, Military Roles in Modernization: Civil Military Relations in Thailand Burma (Beverly Hills: Sage Publishers, 1976), p. 155.

[12] Eradication of "redism" was an important part of the military's justification for its usurpation of the duly constituted Thamrong government. See "Letters and Personal Notes of Lt. General Kat Katsongkram" in Thak Chaloemtiarana ed. Thai Politics Extracts and Documents 1932-57 Vol. I, p. 554. In citing reasons for the 1947 cuup d'etat Kat notes that the Pridi-Thamrong government was "overly disposed towards 'redism.' The powerful allowed Thailand to become a member to the Union of Southeast Asia together with Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia."

[13] For an elaboration of this idea see Alfred Vagts, A History of Militarism: Civilian and Military (New York: Meridian Books, 1959), pp. 57-74.

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APPENDIX "A"

Table I. SIAM: ESTIMATED INCREASE IN POPULATION, 1937-48[a]

(In Millions)

	Population
1937 (census year)	14.5
1938	14.7
1939	15.0
1940	15.3
1941	15.5
1942	15.8
1943	16.1
1944	16.4
1945	16.7
1946	17.0
1947 (census year)	17.3
1948	17.6

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[a] Population figures are estimated from returns for the May 1937 census (14,464,105), and preliminary figures for the May 1947 census (17,256,825), on the basis of an average annual increase of about 1.8 percent.

APPENDIX "B"

Table II. COST OF LIVING INDICES OF LOW-SALARIED WORKERS IN BANGKOK (Base (1948) = 100)

Year	Cost of Living	Food	Clothing	Rent	Fuel & Light	Misc.
1938	8.02	4.98	2.63	41.67	15.76	11.83
1945	72.33	...	...	...	...	...
1946	85.91	...	...	...	...	...
1947	100.26	99.41	156.85	77.77	93.41	104.72
1948	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
1949	96.09	94.54	77.36	111.11	108.41	99.23
1950 March	103.08	103.55	83.13	111.11	109.74	95.83
June	99.36	98.98	76.36	111.11	109.74	96.27
September	96.86	93.86	106.04	111.11	116.16	96.27
December	99.94	93.66	96.79	111.11	123.12	136.87

Source: _Thailand Statistical Yearbook_ 1952.

APPENDIX "C"

Table III. SIAM: COST OF LIVING INDEX FOR CLERICAL CLASS, 1939-47
(1938 = 100)

1939	102.60
1940	112.70
1941	132.90
1942	176.99
1943	257.56
1944	470.33
1945	901.78
1946	1,071.07
January	911.70
February	1,054.94
March	1,203.39
April	1,177.50
May	1,129.48
June	1,107.95
July	1,122.77
August	1,057.33
September	1,031.54
October	1,015.36
November	1,003.36
December	1,037.59
1947	1,253.19
January	1,140.37
February	1,238.28
March	1,343.21
April	1,412.91
May	1,405.17
June	1,370.15
July	1,262.81
August	1,279.38
September	1,168.62
October	1,138.92
November	1,138.92
December	1,139.58

Source: REF-338.48/28776, January 1948, CONFIDENTIAL, index compiled by Department of Commercial Intelligence, Bangkok.

APPENDIX "D"

TABLE IV. 1932 COUP PROMOTERS IN THAI CABINETS

	Total N	Total Prom.	Senior Clique	Junior Clique			
				Total	Army	Civil	Navy
1. Mano I (12/10/32-5/1/33)	20	11	4	7	1	5	1
2. Mano II (4/1/33-6/21/33	20	8	4	4	1	1	2
3. Phahol I (6/21/33-12/16/33)	18	6	1	5	1	2	2
4. Phahol II (12/16/33-9/22/34)	19	6	1	5	1	1	3
5. Phahol III (9/22/34-7/9/37)	17	7	1	6	1	2	3
6. Phahol IV (7/9/37-12/21/37)	20	7	2	5	1	1	3
7. Phahol V (12/21/37-12/16/38)	21	12	3	9	3	3	3
8. Phibul I (12/16/38-3/6/42)	32	20	0	20	8	8	4
9. Phibul II (3/7/42-8/1/44)	30	16	0	16	8	5	3
10. Khuang I (8/1/44-7/31/45)	24	10	1	9	0	5	4
11. Thawi (7/31/45-8/17/45)	23	8	0	8	1	5	2
12. Seni (8/17/45-1/31/46)	25	7	0	7	1	6	0
13. Khuang II (1/31/46-3/24/46)	21	5	0	5	2	2	1
14. Pridi I (3/24/46-6/8/46)	16	6	0	6	1	5	0
15. Pridi II[a] (6/8/46-6/9/46)							
16. Pridi III (6/11/46-8/23/46)	16	7	0	7	1	5	1
17. Thamrong I (8/23/46-5/30/47)	19	6	0	6	1	4	1
18. Thamrong II (5/30/47-9/8/47)	19	2	0	2	1	0	1

Source: Fred W. Riggs, "Cabinet Politicians in Thailand: A Bureaucratic Elite," Paper prepared for delivery at the 1962 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C., p. 20.

[a] Data on this very brief (2-day) interim cabinet has been omitted.